Ergonomic Guidelines for Home Based Workers

The recommendations in this document are meant to be a guide to maximize your comfort in your home-based work environment. We realize that not all recommendations are applicable or possible in every situation. Please practice those that are appropriate for your circumstances.

Working Posture Conditions

- ☐ Head and neck are upright, not bent down or back
- ☐ Head, neck and trunk are facing forward, not twisted
- ☐ Trunk is near perpendicular to the floor, not leaning forward or backward
- ☐ Shoulders are relaxed, and upper arms are near perpendicular to the floor, not stretched forward, outward, or elevated
- ☐ Elbows and upper arms are not overly extended outward
- ☐ Forearms are parallel to the floor, not sloping up or down
- ☐ Wrists and hands are straight, not bent up/down or sideways toward the little finger
- ☐ Thighs are parallel to the floor and lower legs are perpendicular to the floor
- ☐ Feet are resting flat on the floor or are supported by a footrest
- ☐ Computer tasks are organized in a way that allows you to vary computer tasks with other work activities

Seating

While a chair designed for desk work is the best option, if you do not have one available, a comfortable seat with back support is the next best thing. Avoid backless seating, such as a stool.

- ☐ Backrest should provide support for the lower back (lumbar area)
- ☐ If you can't adjust your chair to fit, use rolled up towels to support your spine in the neutral position. Neutral means that you'll be supporting the three natural curves in your spine, keeping your whole spine aligned, ears above shoulders above hips. (Trivia: the neutral body position was developed by NASA.)
- ☐ Seat width and length/depth accommodate you (seat pan is not too short, too long, too narrow, or too wide)
- ☐ If chair has adjustable armrests, they should support both forearms while the you perform computer tasks and do not interfere with either the you or chair movement

Keyboard & Input Devices

- ☐ Keyboard and mouse platform should be stable and large enough to hold both devices
- ☐ If using a laptop, use a separate mouse, keyboard and monitor when possible
- ☐ Pointing device (mouse, trackball) should be located right next to the keyboard so it can be operated without reaching
- ☐ Wrists and hands should not rest on hard surface or sharp edge

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Monitor

If using a monitor, it should be arranged so that:

- ☐ Top of monitor cabinet is at or below your eye level, so you can read the screen without bending your head or neck backward or forward
- ☐ Monitor distance (about an arm's length away) allows you to read the screen without leaning (head, neck, trunk) forward or backward
- ☐ Monitor position is directly in front of you so you do not have to twist or turn your head or neck
- ☐ If you wear bifocals or trifocals, position your monitor so you are able to read the screen without bending (head, neck, trunk) forward or backward
- ☐ Glare should not be present on the screen from windows or lights

Work area

The work area should be arranged so that:

- ☐ Thighs have clearance space between the chair and workstation
- ☐ Legs and feet have clearance space under the workstation, so you are able to get close enough to the keyboard and pointing device

General

- ☐ Environment is not causing issues (i.e. temperature, noise, smells, lighting)
- ☐ Every 20 minutes take 20 seconds to look 20 feet away