



RESOURCES : Ergonomics

Prolonged sitting can put a lot of stress on the body and can result in neck or low back pain. To help minimise the strain on the body it is important to set up your desk correctly.

Ergonomic Seated Posture

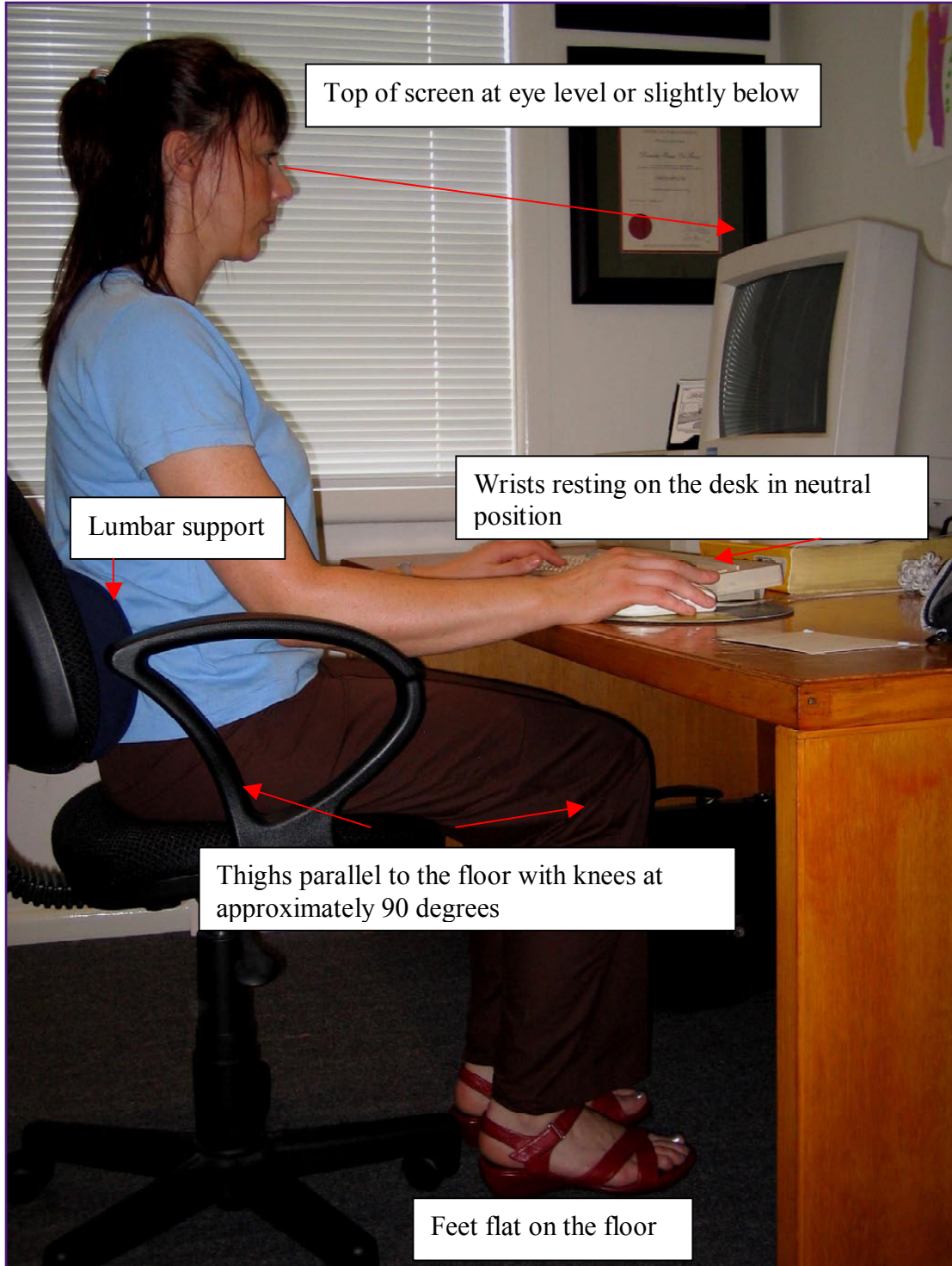
- Keep your head straight, try to avoid any forward or backward tilting.
- Your thighs should be parallel to the floor with your feet flat on the floor. (Use a foot rest if required). Ideally, you should keep your knees at a 90° angle.
- Use a good chair with lumbar support. If this is insufficient you can use a lumbar roll, a rolled up towel or a small pillow for extra support.
- Try to have 2-3 inches of space between the back of your knees and the chair.

Computer Setup

- Your chair should be adjusted so that your elbows rest by your side at a 90° angle, parallel with the floor. Your wrists need to be resting on the key board in a neutral position (not flexed or extended).
- Both the monitor and key board should be placed directly in front of you.
- The top of the monitor must be at or slightly below eye level. You can either adjust the height of your chair or raise the height of the monitor using an old phone book.
- Ideally you should be seated at arm's length from the computer screen.

Extra tips

- An adjustable swivel chair makes it easier to move about and reach for things at your desk.
- If you are on the phone a lot, it would be better to use a headset so that you are able to use the computer or write without straining your neck.
- If you are transcribing documents attach a document holder to the screen so that you are not straining your neck.
- Adjust the lighting at your work so there is minimal glare to reduce eye strain. It may be necessary to turn off the over-head lights and use task lights at your desk. You may also need a glare-screen on your computer.
- Remember to take regular breaks, where possible avoid sitting for more than one hour at a time. Take every opportunity to leave your chair and stand up or walk around for a minute or two. During these breaks remember to stretch out your neck and back.



Sitting at your desk diagram



Ergonomics: Lifting

Many low back injuries are the result of incorrect lifting. It is very important to learn a proper lifting technique but also to test the weight before you lift it. If it is too heavy, get help from someone else. You may even need to use a mechanical lever such as a cart or a trolley.

- Stand as close as you can to the load.
- Position your feet shoulder width apart for a good support base, with your toes pointing slightly outwards.
- Bend at your knees and hips. Do not bend from the waist.
- Before you lift remember to tighten through your abdominal muscles to support your spine.
- Lift up with the strength of your legs, keep the movement smooth without jerking. A sudden shift in the weight could result in injury.
- Keep the load as close to your body as you can.
- Keep your spine as straight as possible throughout the lift.
- If you need to turn with your feet. Avoid twisting as it may result in injury.
- Keep all these points in mind when lowering an object to the ground

