

Ergonomics is more than a sore back for office workers!

Good ergonomics is important for all employees, not just those confined to an office. Public Safety, Public Works, Community Services, and all other departments within Kent County should practice good ergonomics to help workers stay healthy. The goal of office ergonomics is to design your designated work area so that it fits you and allows for a comfortable working environment for maximum productivity and efficiency. If left untreated, ergonomic problems can result in muscle and joint pain and injuries.

According to the National Safety Council, factors that contribute to poor ergonomics include working in awkward positions; having a poorly set-up workstation; overexerting yourself when lifting, pushing or pulling; and sitting for too long in one position.

To avoid ergonomic issues, including pain and injury:

- Stretch and walk around regularly; do not remain sedentary.
- Do not ignore pain. Inform your supervisor immediately if you experience pain or injury on the job.
- Refrain from carrying items that are too heavy.
- Sleep on a quality mattress that supports good posture.
- Select tools that are ergonomically designed for comfort.

For employees that work at a computer for the majority of the day follow these tips:



- Ensure your chair is adjusted so your feet rest on the floor and your knees are level with your hips. No lumbar support? Use a cushion between the curve of your back and the back of your chair.
- Keep items you regularly use – including the telephone or a stapler – close to your body to avoid unnecessary stretching throughout the day.
- Position your computer mouse close to your keyboard, and keep your wrist relaxed when using the mouse.
- Keep your wrist in a straight position when typing – not bent up or down – and consider using a wrist rest to help minimize stress.
- Make sure that the weight of your arms is supported at all times. If your arms are not supported, the muscles of your neck and shoulders will be crying by the end of the day.
- Do you talk a lot on the phone? Cradling a phone between your head and neck can cause strain. Use a headset to eliminate this issue.
- Pay attention to your posture. Keep your body centered in front of your monitor and keyboard, and your thighs horizontal with your knees.
- Make sure you have plenty of space under your desk for your legs, knees and thighs. Mayo Clinic recommends having a desk at least 19 inches deep, 30 inches wide and up to 34 inches high (depending on your height).
- Keep your monitor about an arm's length in front of you.
- To help avoid glare, keep the brightest light source in your office to the side of your monitor.

Use these tips and tricks to set up your work space and avoid injuring yourself in the work place.

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