ERGONOMIC SELF-EVALUATION

This worksheet will help you determine if your workstation fits you. Each person is unique, therefore, the workstation must be configured to complement your individuality. It is important to become aware of what your body tells you about small aches or minor discomforts. Ignored symptoms can progress into injury and chronic pain. Notice every day how you feel at the workstation. Evaluating your comfort level on a daily basis is an important step in reducing musculoskeletal tension from normal job stresses. It is actually possible to RELAX, increase your productivity, efficiency, and enjoy your job! EVERYONE benefits from good ergonomics.

CHAIR ADJUSTMENT
- Do you know how to adjust the chair height, seat pan, back support, and rocking mechanism?
- Are you sitting fully back in the chair? (Required for proper lumbar and lower body support.) Adjust chair so that feet are positioned firmly on the floor, or on a footrest, if needed.
- Does the seat pan fit you without the backs of your knees touching or overextending the seat pan front?
- Is the chair aligned with the keyboard and computer screen? Do your legs fit comfortably under the keyboard or desktop? (Avoid reaching for keyboard.)

CHECK SEATED POSTURE AT DESK
- Are elbows, hips and knees approximately at 90-degree angles with shoulders relaxed?
- Are your head and neck balanced when you are facing the computer screen? Raise or lower the chair, monitor or desktop to achieve head and neck balance.
- Is your wrist angle straight (180 degrees [flat]) when your hands are positioned on the keyboard? If not, adjust the chair, or adjust the keyboard tray to achieve the correct wrist angle.

FOOT SUPPORT AT A FIXED DESK HEIGHT
- Books, binders, or reams of copier paper make temporary foot support until your department can provide appropriate footrests. Experiment with the temporary materials to determine the comfortable height for you so your feet don’t dangle. Remember to consider your footwear preferences (low or high heels). You do not need a footrest if your feet rest flat on the floor. If your workstation is adjustable, lower the desk so that your feet are flat on the floor while your wrists are straight at the keyboard.

EQUIPMENT PLACEMENT
- Is your wrist angle straight (180 degrees [flat])? This is important! That’s why it is repeated here. Readjust your chair and keyboard. Raise or lower the desk, if needed. Assume correct posture and train yourself to keep wrists straight. Palm or wrist rests are effective only for resting, not staying, to avoid putting pressure on the wrists.

Over
EYE POSITION AND GLARE
- Are your eyes approximately level with the top of the monitor screen, and at the recommended distance of 18” to 30”? Bifocal wearers may need the screen to be slightly lower. Are glare sources mitigated?
- Is the document holder positioned adjacent to the monitor at eye level?

MOUSE
- Is the mouse located next to the keyboard to avoid arm stretching? An extended keyboard tray, slide-out mouse tray, or mouse bridge can help reduce shoulder pain caused by overextending the arm.

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER
- **Office & Knee Space:** Legroom under desk is essential for maintaining correct seated posture and body alignment. Avoid storing items on the floor anywhere. Unnecessary bending, twisting and reaching under the desk causes lower back pain. Sit close to work area with legs under the desk. If desk is narrow and computer screen is too close, an under-the-counter keyboard tray will put distance between you and the screen. Avoid twisting the body when seated. Swivel your chair and maintain body alignment when scooting around the workstation.

- **Large Documents & Other Heavy Items:** Store heavy items at desk height, not on the floor, to reduce unnecessary bending and lifting. Use carts for temporary storage when desk or countertop space is not available. Transport fewer heavy items at one time. **Don't save time at the expense of your back.** Get help or use carts and other mechanical aids for bulky items.

- **Workstation Arrangement:** Relocate non-essential items away from the principal work area, and move frequently used items closer to you. Easy access reduces unnecessary reaching that produces fatigue.

- **Telephones:** Telephone headsets are recommended where telephone traffic is significant and staff need both hands free. Avoid cradling the phone receiver between shoulder and chin which causes neck and shoulder pain.

- **Ergonomic Rest Breaks:** Take allotted lunch and rest breaks to permit the body to recover from accumulated work fatigue and tension. Fatigued muscles and tendons are more prone to injury. Fatigued workers make more mistakes and are more likely to get injured. Relaxed workers are more productive and efficient. Rested employees get more work done in less time with energy to spare for enjoying leisure time away from the job.