

University of
Western Sydney

Office Ergonomics & Safety

Occupational Health, Safety & Risk Unit

Scope

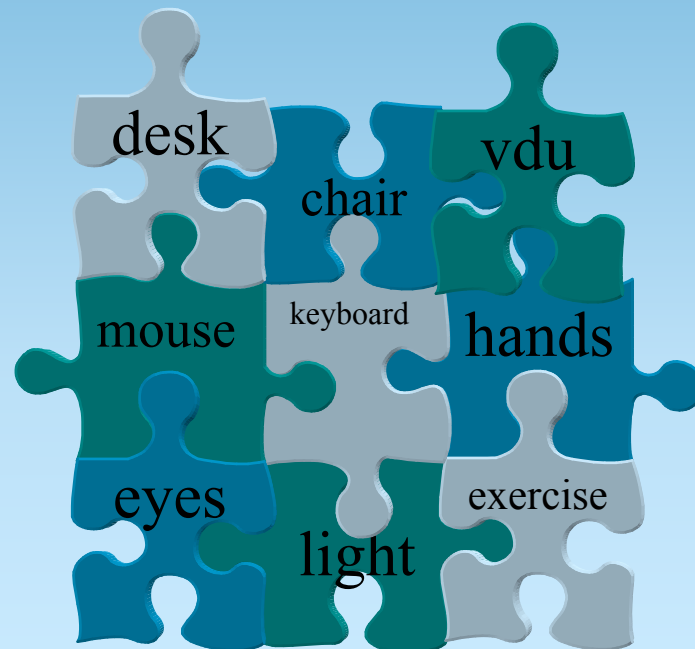
- To enable staff reduce the risk factors that are inherent in screen based work.
- To ensure staff are able to recognise the signs & symptoms usually associated with the onset of “soft tissue” injuries & take appropriate steps to avoid exacerbating the condition.
- Ensure staff can identify & control the range of hazards & risks associated with office based work

Objectives

- Know how to correctly adjusting your chair to optimize the match between the body & desk.
- Perform basic exercise routines to promote blood flow and reduce muscle fatigue.
- Effectively use simple keyboard workstation assessment checklists to identify & assess the functionality & serviceability of keyboard workstations
- Identify & implement adequate control measures for the hazards that are inherent in office based work

Obtaining the best ergonomic fit:

- People
- Task design
- Environment
- Equipment
- Software
- Supervision
- Education
- Culture



Common terms used to describe the range of conditions characterised by discomfort or persistent pain in muscles, tendons & other soft tissues, with or without physical manifestations:

- Cumulative Trauma Disorder (CTD)
- Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)
- Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS)
- These conditions are usually caused or aggravated by repetitive movement, sustained or constrained postures &/or forceful movements

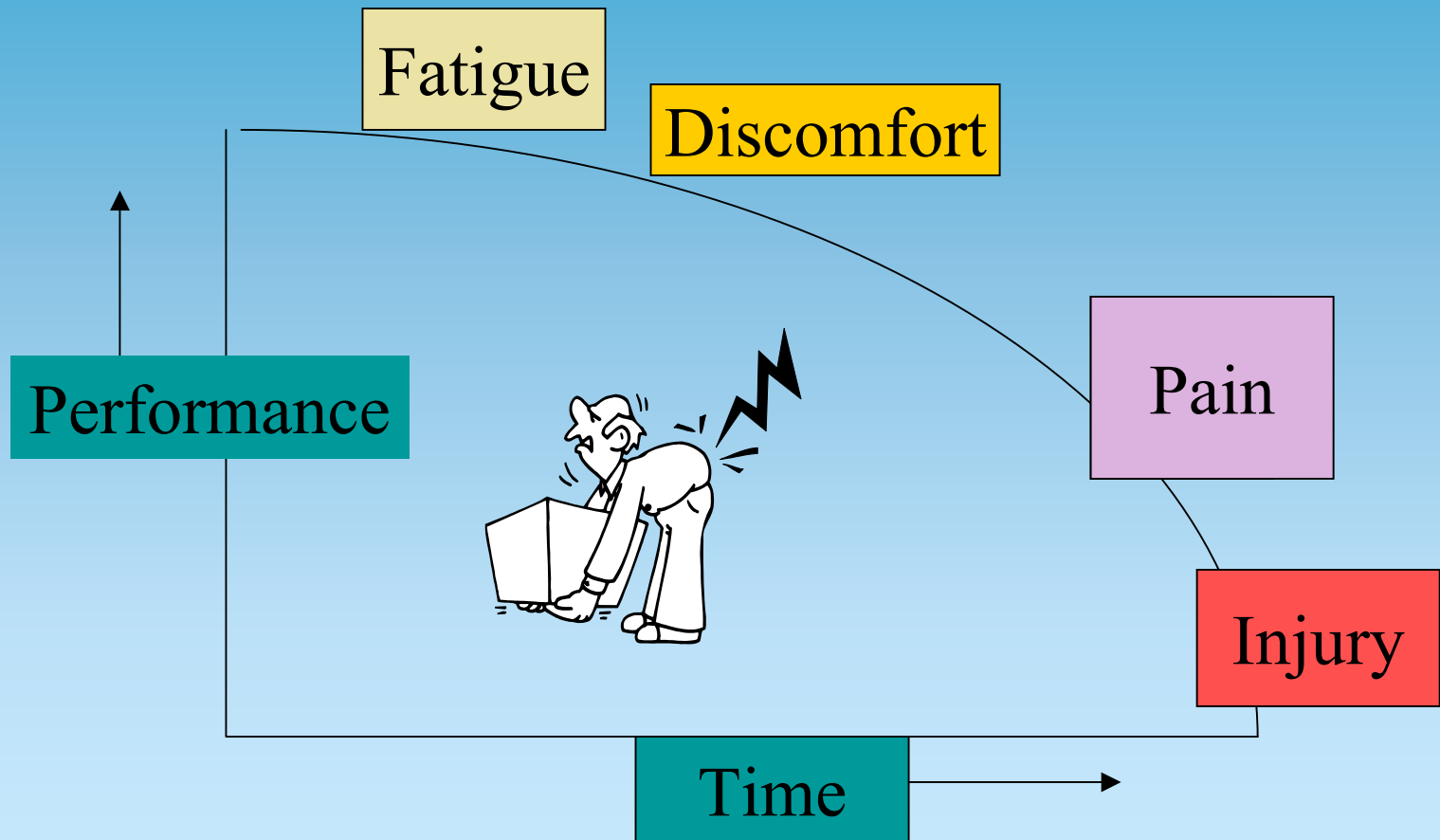


Who is most at risk?

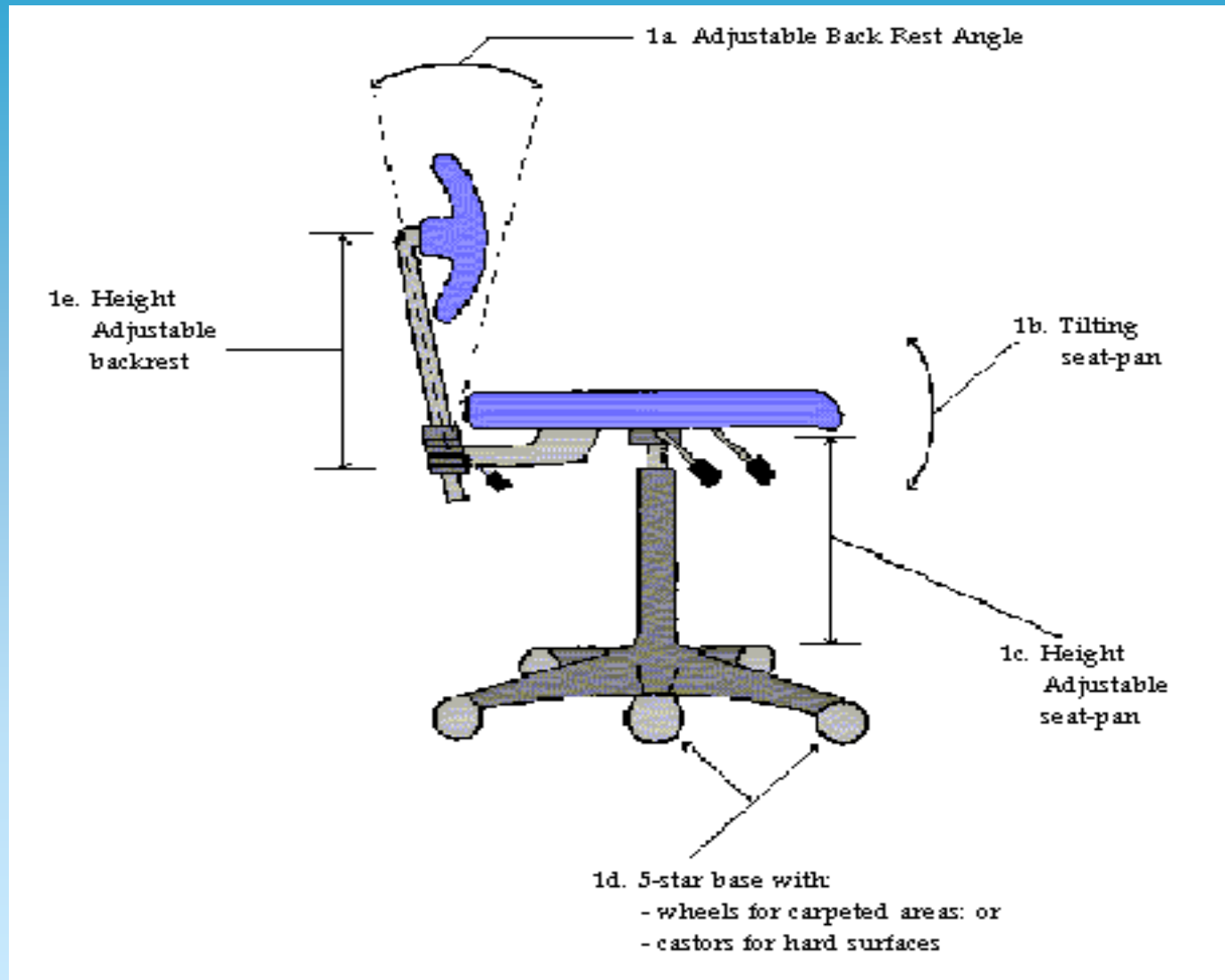
- Process workers
- Machinists
- Keyboard operators
- Typists
- Clerks
- Carpet layers
- Mail sorters



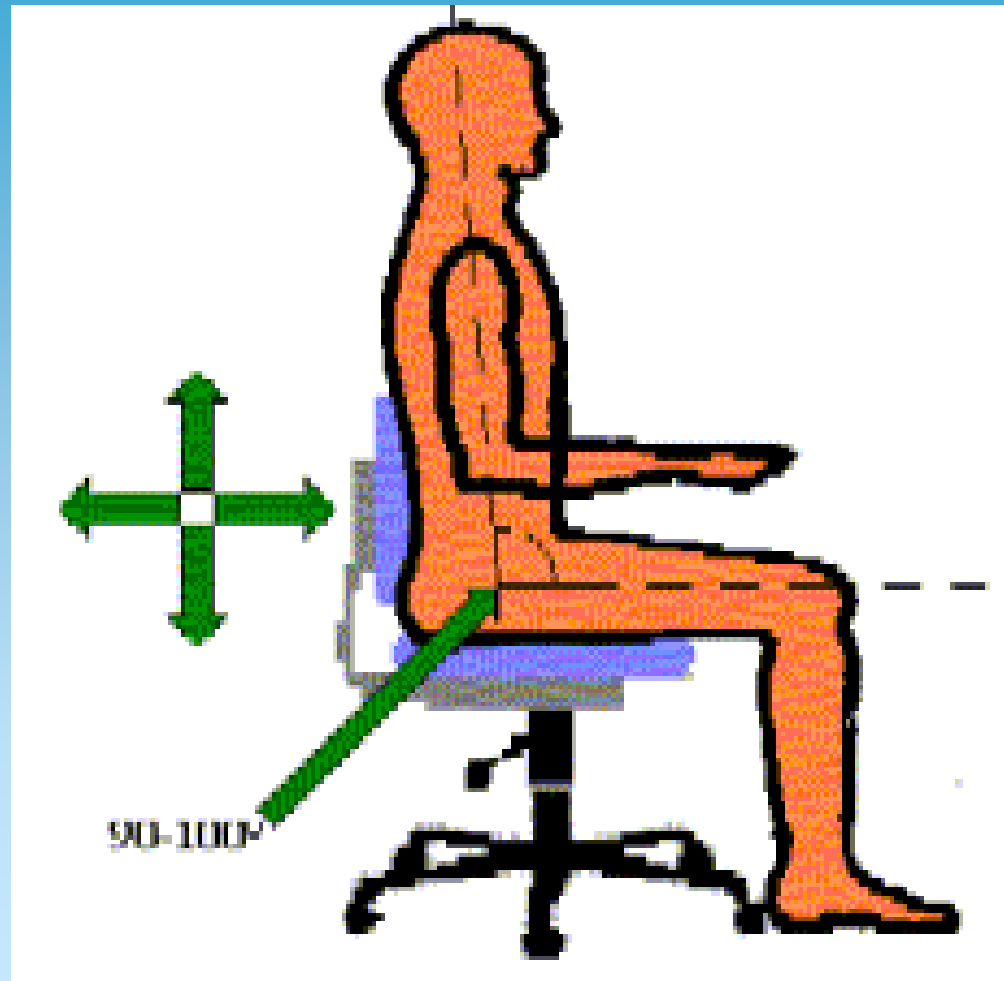
Indicators of Work-Related Ergonomic Problems



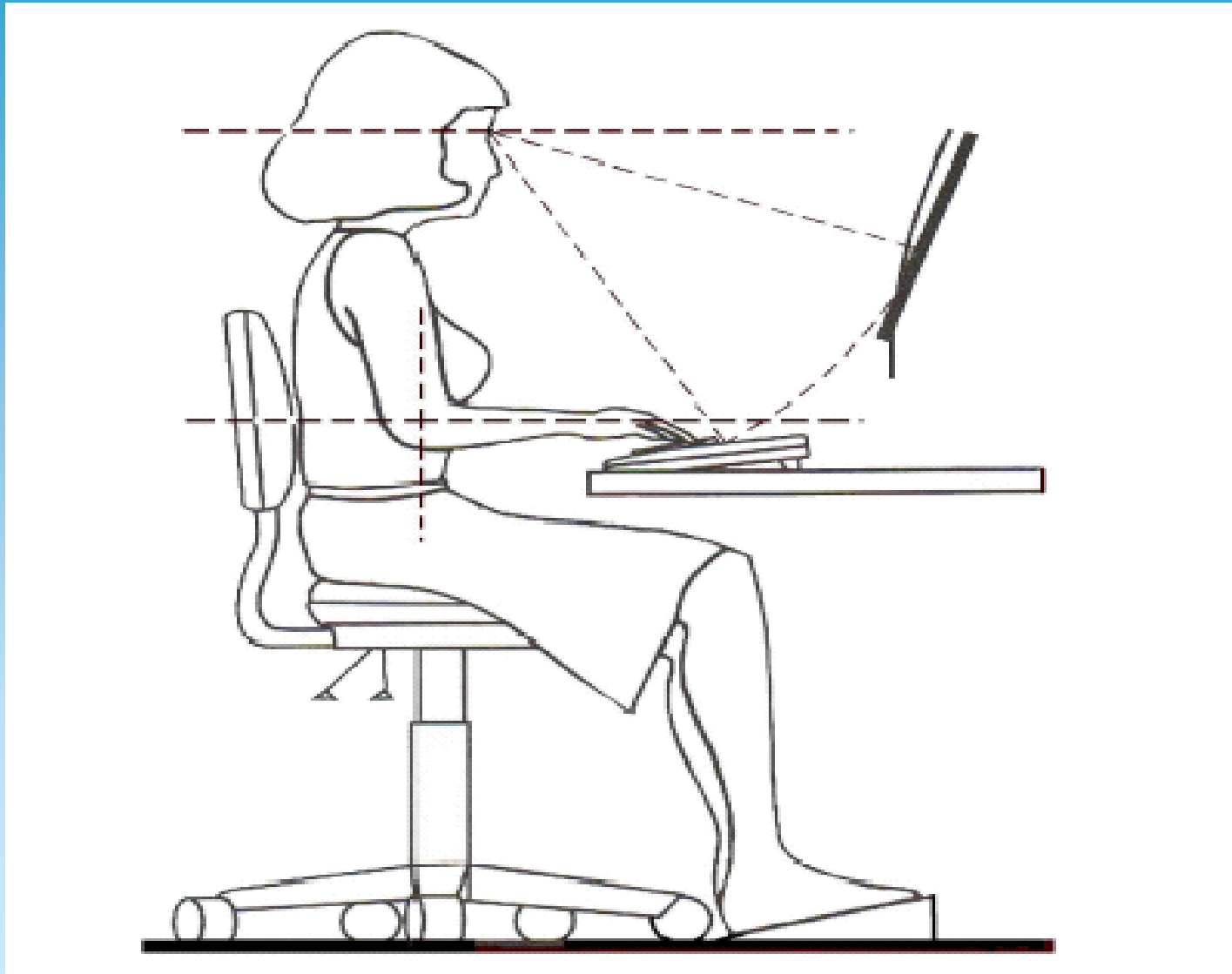
Adjusting your chair



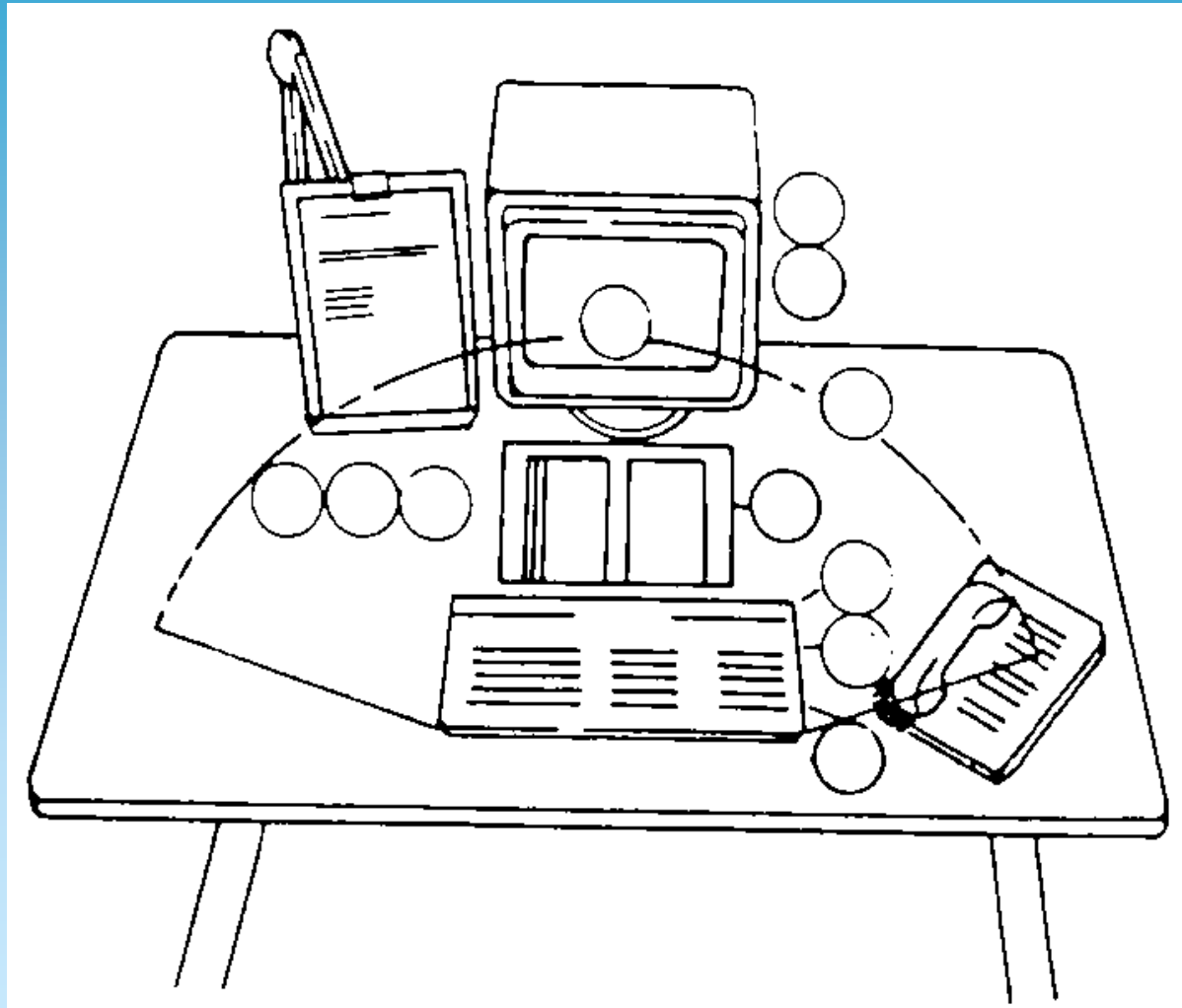
Sitting at your desk



Positioning the Monitor

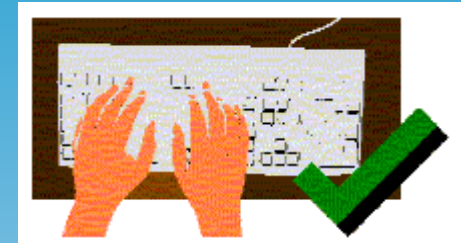


Organising your Work-Space

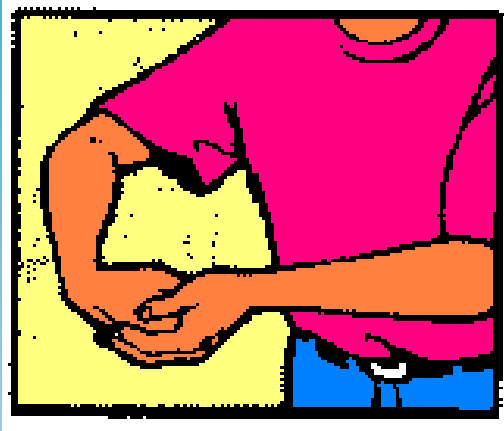


Important “Rules of Thumb”:

- Appropriate keyboard placement
- Appropriate mouse placement & use
- No necking the phone
- Eye rest breaks
- Shorter more frequent breaks
- Know how your chair works
- Check serviceability regularly
- Vary tasks
- Pace yourself
- Monitor your body
- Seek help if required

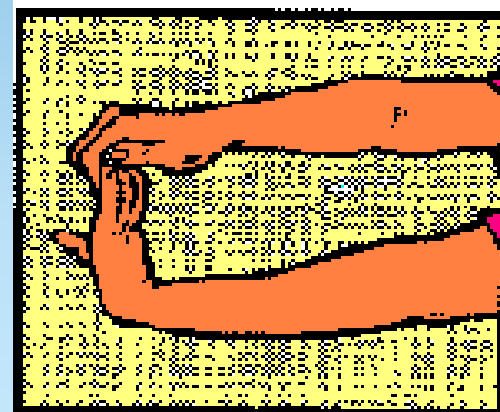


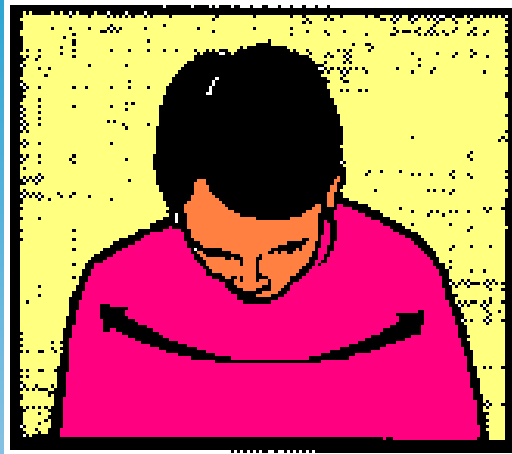
2 – Minute Warm-Up Exercises



Stretch your arm out in front
With your elbow straight,
Palm facing away from you.
With your hand pull your
Fingers backwards until
you feel the stretch.

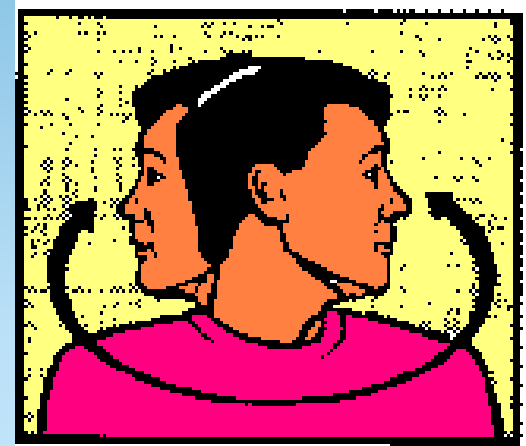
Bend your wrist & fingers
with your other hand, bending
your elbow slightly at the same
time, until you feel the stretch
Over the back of your forearm.



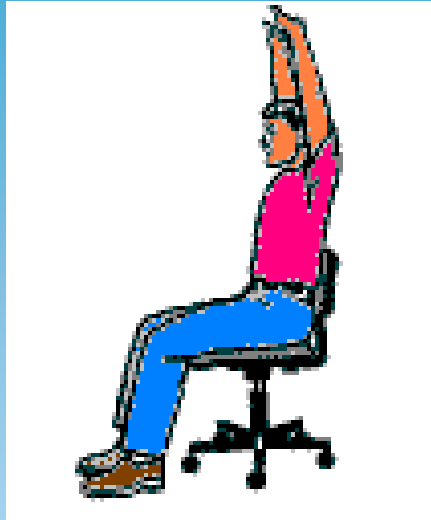


Tuck your chin down onto your chest and gently turn your head from side to side, keeping your chin on your chest.

Turn your head slowly from Side to side ten times



Breaks



Interlock fingers, palms up. Stretch arms above the head until they are straight. Do not arch the back



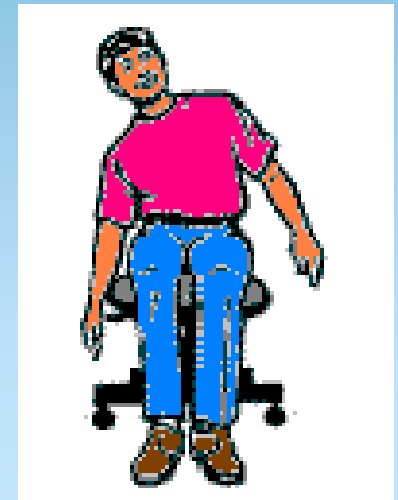
Roll the shoulders – raise them, pull them back, then drop them & relax. Repeat in the opposite direction



Grasp shin, lift leg off the floor.
Send forward curling the back,
with nose towards the knee.

Note: This should be avoided in pre-
or Post-natal conditions.

Drop left shoulder, reaching left
hand towards the floor. Return
to starting position. Repeat on
right side.



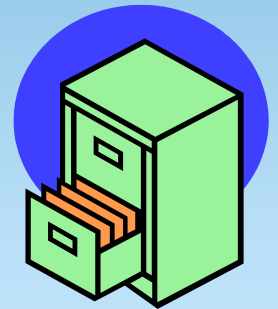
Other common office based hazards

- Loose leads, cords, wires, cables
- Overloaded electrical circuits
- Unrealistic work loads & time lines
- Faulty or unserviceable emergency equipment
- Unserviceable chairs
- Faulty electrical appliances & equipment



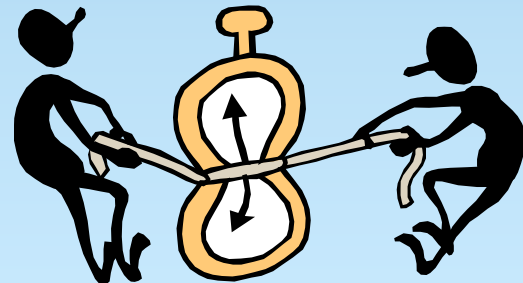
Other common office based hazards

- Heavy boxes, equipment, furniture
- Extremes of temperature, ventilation, lighting, humidity
- Loose carpets & floor coverings, slippery floors
- Draws left open
- Poor hygiene & housekeeping
- Excessive fuel loads eg old papers
- Overcrowding



Common hazard control measures for office based environments:

- Take immediate actions to control potential hazards
- Adopt realistic workloads & timelines
- Proper installation of cables & wiring
- Avoid using adaptors & power boards
- Do not use faulty equipment replace, tag or destroy
- No heavy lifting



Common hazard control measures for office based environments:

- Implement effective servicing agreements for air conditioning systems
- Initiate maintenance requests as required
- Keep filing cabinets closed when not in use
- Discard rubbish
- Resist proposals that would lead to overcrowding in offices
- Introduce & maintain appropriate hygiene & housekeeping measures

Major benefits derived from eliminating &/or reducing office based hazards:

- Reduced occupational risks
- Reduced incidence of injury
- Reduced direct & indirect costs
- Reduced interruption to business activity
- Increased job satisfaction
- Lower staff turnover
- Increased morale
- Increased output



Where to Get More Information

- Other training sessions
- UWS Health & Safety in the Office Guidelines (Draft)
- UWS Library
- www.ergonomic.org.au Ergonomics Society of Aust.
- Consulting services, other sources

