Winnipeg Regional   Office régional de la
Health Authority   santé de Winnipeg
Caring for Health   *À l'écoute de notre santé*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS – Workstation Bulletins

Ideal Work Practices

To reduce sedentary sitting time, include the following work practices into your workday.

➤ **General Guidelines:**
- Vary your sitting posture and your tasks throughout the day, as much as possible.
  - Use the adjustable features of your chair to make minor changes to your seated position (refer to "Adjusting the Office Chair" for information regarding adjusting your chair).
- Incorporate frequent movement/stretch breaks throughout your day.
  - Micro breaks (10-20 sec. every 5-10 min.) – alter position & give postural muscles a break, rest hands from typing.
  - Mini breaks (2-5 min. every 30 min.) - perform specific exercises and/or work tasks that require standing/walking.
  - Organize group stretch/movement breaks.
- Stand/walk to speak with someone instead of sending an email or try standing meetings.
- Stand/walk around while talking on the phone.
- Set-up "Task Scheduler" for reminders to get out of chair.
- Re-locate printers so employees have to get up and walk.

Common Errors
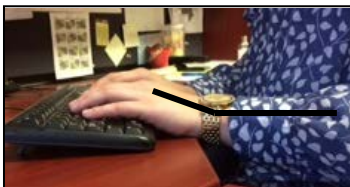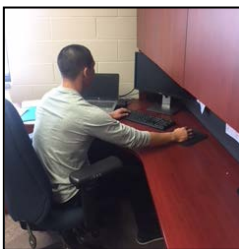
Solutions

Error: Frequent and/or sustained awkward sitting postures (e.g. leaning forward, slouching, head forward/chin out, legs crossed, resting feet on chair casters).

Corrective Action: Sit all the way back in your chair and utilize the back rest to keep a straight spine. Maintain ears over shoulders, chin slightly tucked in when sitting or standing (refer to "Adjusting the Office Chair" for information regarding adjusting your chair).

Error: Keyboard and mouse are positioned too far away from the body.
Corrective Action: Place mouse and keyboard closer so that elbows are by your side.

Error: Resting wrists on desk.
Corrective Action: Place armrests level with the keyboard or slightly above and use armrests for support rather than the desk. If this is not possible, use a soft gel wrist rest.

Adjusting the Office Chair

The office chair should be adjustable to provide an appropriate fit and allow for minor sitting position changes. Regardless of the type of chair or set up, it is important to take frequent movement/stretch breaks (refer to "Ideal Work Practices" for further information).
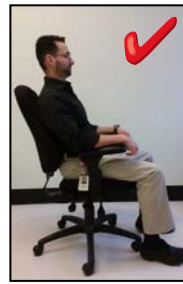
➢ **General Guidelines - Sitting Posture**
- Vary your sitting posture and your tasks throughout the day, as much as possible.
  - Use the adjustable features of your chair to make minor changes to your seated position.

Poorly Adjusted	Sitting Upright	Sitting with Slight Recline	→	Rock Back & Forth

➢ **Adjustable Features**

Backrest height adjustment varies:
- Knob: Turn knob to loosen
- Paddle: Found at bottom of backrest
- No lever: Pull backrest up to unlock and raise to correct height

Chair Height

Chair Tilt

Seat depth adjustment varies:
- Paddle: Opposite side of seat
- Lever: Under front of seat

Back Rest Recline/Tilt

Arm rest:

- Adjust arm rests to the height of (or slightly lower than your elbow) when sitting upright with good posture. Ensure you are not hiking your shoulders up.

Seat:

Too Long   Too Short   Correct Length

Adjust seat depth so there are 2-3 finger spaces between the back of your knees and the front edge of the seat, while keeping contact with the backrest. A smaller seat may be needed if the seat touches the back of your knee and it cannot be adjusted further back.

Back Rest:

Lumbar Support

Adjust back rest height so the lumbar support is positioned at approximately your waist line. The back rest should make contact with your back to allow the muscles to relax (i.e., sit all the way back in the chair).

Chair Height:

- Adjust height of chair so your armrests are in line with the height of the keyboard. If your feet are not flat on the ground, use a foot rest.

Keyboard / Mouse

➢ **Ideal Set-up**
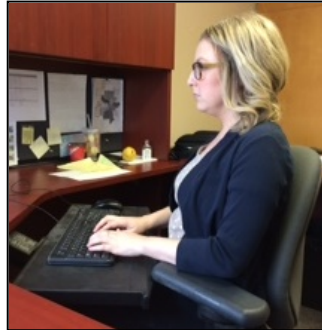
➢ **General Guidelines:**

- Armrests at the height of the keyboard and mouse: wrists straight. Lower keyboard feet. Elbows bent approximately 90°. Armrests supporting forearms.
- Position body and chair close to keyboard/mouse with back fully supported in chair and elbows at side of body. Center to keyboard: "B" key in line with belly button.
- Keyboard and mouse on same surface. Mouse close to keyboard.
- Mousing: Rest palm and fingers lightly on mouse, relax the wrist and hand and use the shoulder. Do not move wrist side to side. Avoid resting wrists on wrist support or surface of desk when typing and mousing. Wrist supports: rest the palm (not the wrist) after typing.
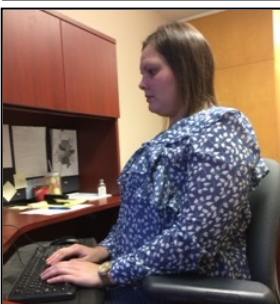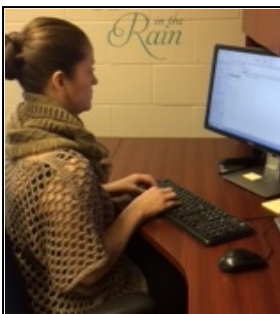
| **Common Errors**	**Solutions**
	Error: Sitting too low or keyboard too high: elbows bent more than 90°, wrists bent/not straight. **Corrective Action:** - Desk Surface: Raise chair. If feet do not touch floor, use a footrest. - Keyboard Tray: Lower keyboard tray.
	Error: Sitting too high or keyboard too low: elbows bent less than 90°; wrists are bent backwards/not straight and resting on surface. **Corrective Action:** - Desk Surface: Lower chair. - Keyboard Tray: Raise keyboard tray.
	Error: Mouse at a distance from keyboard, shoulder and elbow are away from the side of body. **Corrective Action:** Place mouse close to keyboard. If possible when mousing, slide keyboard slightly to the left and place mouse in line with shoulder. If possible for right handed users, access keyboard with a left numeric pad or no numeric pad; mouse can then be placed closer in line with shoulder.
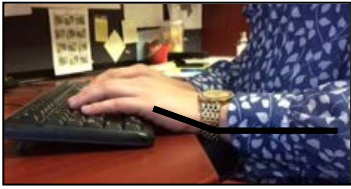
| **Common Errors**	**Solutions**

Error: Keyboard tilted/angled towards worker. Wrists are placed into extension/bent backwards and resting on desk surface.
Corrective Action: Lower keyboard feet. Keyboard should be flat or in a negative tilt, tilted away from worker. Ensure wrists are straight. Avoid resting wrists on desk or keyboard tray.

Error: Mouse located on a different surface. Shoulder/elbow: away from side and in front of body.
Corrective Action: Place mouse on same surface as keyboard. If using a **keyboard tray**: Recommend a tray where the keyboard and mouse are placed on the same surface. Ideal tray length 25-27" when using a keyboard housing a numeric pad.
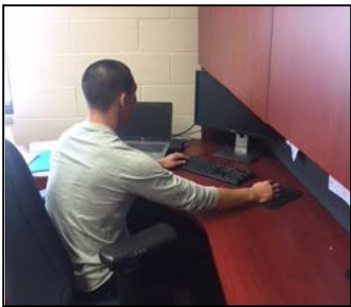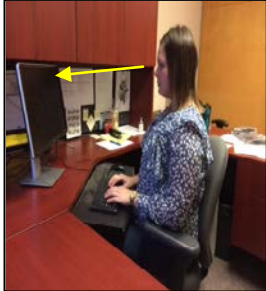

Error: Keyboard and mouse positioned too far away from the body which can lead to reaching.
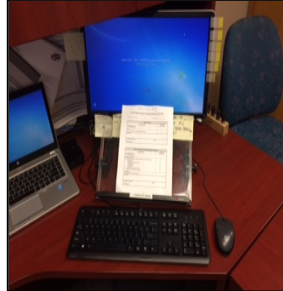**Corrective Action:** Place mouse and keyboard closer so that elbows are by your side when typing/keyboarding and mousing.

Monitors & Document Holders

➤ **Ideal Set-up:**

Ideal monitor set-up

Ideal inline document holder set-up


Ideal free standing side document holder set-up

Ideal monitor set-up to decrease glare. Monitors are placed at a 90 degree angle to the window

➤ **General Guidelines:**

- Recommended height: Top of the screen is at or slightly below eye level.
- For people who wear eyeglasses (bifocals/progressives) and find that they tilt their head back to read the monitor, lower the screen until you no longer need to tilt your neck back.
- Monitor distance should be about an arm's length away. Avoid tilting your neck backwards or leaning forward to view screen.
- For single monitor use, center monitor directly in front of you.
- For dual monitors that are both used **_frequently_**, place monitors next to each other on an angle and center your body in between the two monitors. Both monitors should be at the same height and distance.
- For dual monitors where one is used more frequently than the other and/or one is used **occasionally** to reference information, center the monitor used more frequently directly in front of you and place the second monitor off to either side, angled slightly towards you. Both monitors should be at the same height and distance.
- Place monitor in an area that minimizes glare. Place monitor at a 90 degree angle to the window. Tilting the monitor can also help to reduce glare.
- Place inline document holder between monitor and keyboard.
- Place free standing side document holder beside the monitor as close as possible and at the same height as the monitor.
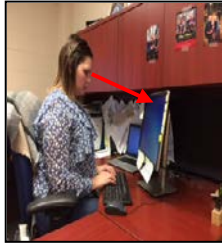
Common Errors   **Solutions**
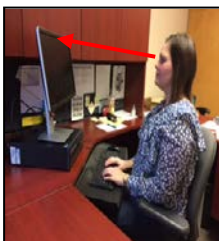
Error: Monitor too high.
Corrective Action: Lower monitor so that the top of the monitor is at or slightly below eye level.

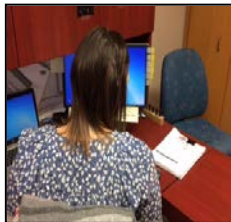| **Common Errors**	**Solutions**

Error: Monitor too low.
Corrective Action: Raise monitor up until the top of the monitor is at or slightly below eye level.

Error: Document holder placed too far from monitor and too low.
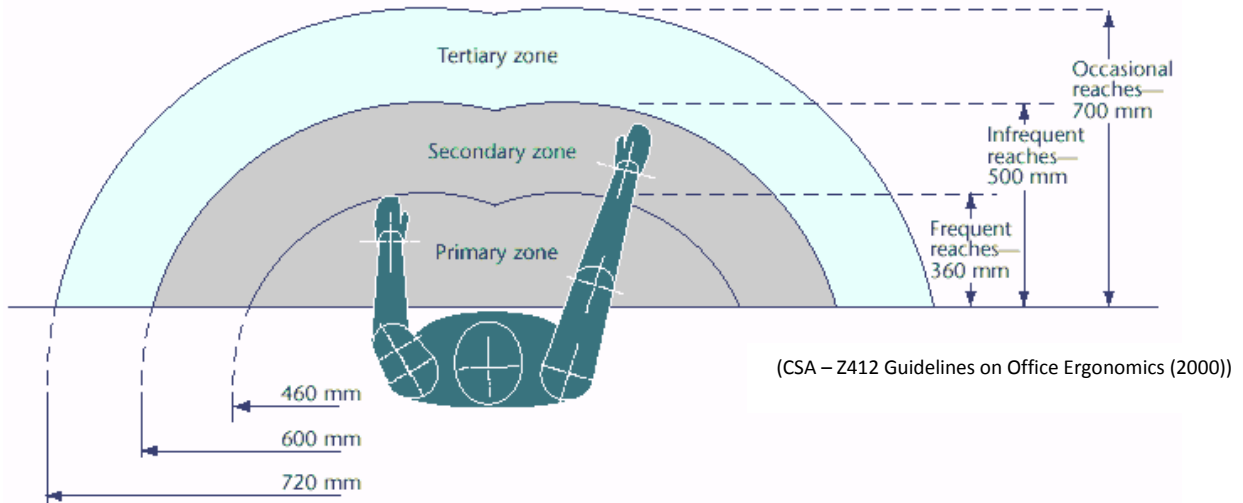**Corrective Action**: Place document holder closer and at the same height as the monitor.

Error: Referencing documents on desk surface.
Corrective Action: Use an inline document holder for referencing documents, larger files/books and/or brief periods of writing. Use a free standing side document holder for referencing paper documents.

Positioning to Decrease Reach

Tertiary zone

Secondary zone

Primary zone

Occasional reaches— 700 mm

Infrequent reaches— 500 mm

Frequent reaches— 360 mm

460 mm

600 mm

720 mm

(CSA – Z412 Guidelines on Office Ergonomics (2000))

Primary Zone is for frequent reaches; e.g., keyboard, mouse, phone (if used often).
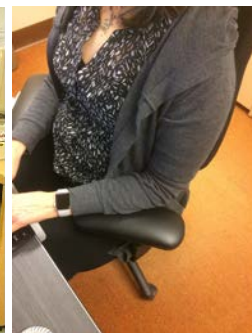
Secondary zone is for infrequent reaches; e.g., documents, highlighters, pens, water bottle, phone (if used less often).

Tertiary zone is for occasional reaches; e.g., monitor, reference material used rarely.
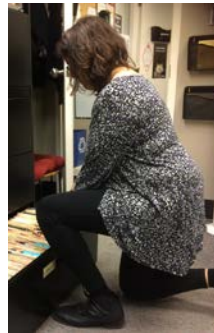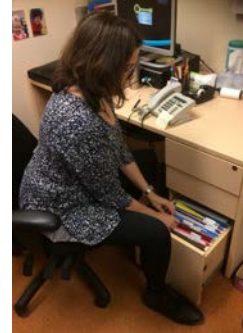
➢ **Ideal Set-Up:**

| Back on backrest and mouse close | Elbows close to side of body | Spine straight to reach low (i.e., ½ kneel) | Face task – do not lean sideways or twist | Stand to reach higher items |

➢ **General Guidelines:**
- Reorganize workspace/storage areas:
  - Place things that are used most frequently within easy reach.
  - Wherever possible, store heavier items between mid-thigh and mid-chest height (e.g., binders/charts/books, boxes). If items are too low, bend your knees/hips and/or get

into a ½ kneel position with back straight. If items are too high, stand on a step stool/ladder.

- Keyboard and mouse should be at the same height next to each other. Keep the mouse as close to keyboard as possible.

Common Errors	Solutions

Error: Mouse located at a different height from keyboard and/or shoulder/elbow is positioned far from body.

Corrective Action: Move chair close to desk and place mouse at the same height as the keyboard. If using a keyboard tray, use a single level platform where the keyboard and mouse are positioned on the same level. Consider using the mouse with the left hand or a reduced reach keyboard (i.e., keyboard with a left or no numeric pad) if the mouse is too far out to the right.
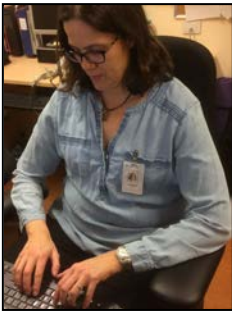
Error: Elbows resting far from the body.

Corrective Action: Adjust chair armrests closer if possible. If you have armrests that rotate, turn the armrests inward. If unable to adjust, you can choose not to use armrests while using the keyboard for short periods or find a chair with narrower armrests.
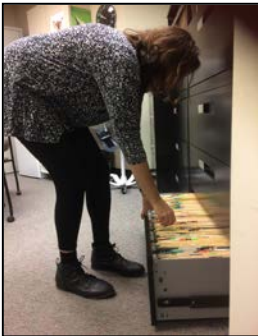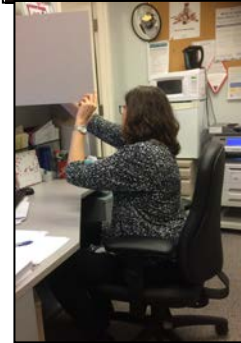

Error: Reaching low by bending back.

Corrective Action: Bend knees/hips and keep back straight or go down on one knee to get lower. Use a wide based stance (i.e., feet apart).

Error: Leaning sideways to reach something especially if holding for any amount of time.

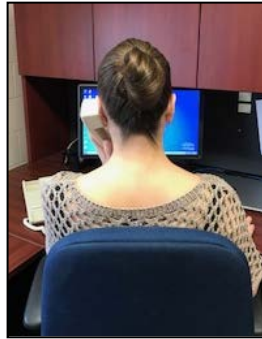**Corrective Action:** Move or turn body to keep items/task directly in front of you.

Error: Sitting in chair to access items stored above shoulder height.

Corrective Action: Stand and use two hands to reach item. If item is still above shoulder level, use a step stool/ladder.

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Telephone

➢ **Ideal Set-Up:**

➢ **General Guidelines:**

- Place phone opposite to your mouse so that one hand is free to hold the phone and the other is free to mouse or write notes.
- Maintain one hand on the phone at all times with an upright posture. **DO NOT** cradle the phone between your shoulder and ear.
- Position phone within arm's reach.
- Use a hands free feature (speaker phone or headset) if you are regularly on the phone or if you are on the phone for a long period of time. Hands free options also allow the user to stand up and move around their work station during long calls or between phone calls.

Common Errors   **Solutions**

Error: Over-reaching to access the phone.
Corrective Action: Position the phone within arm's reach

Error: Cradling the phone between ear and shoulder.
Corrective Action: Maintain one hand on the phone at all times or use speaker phone (if in a private office) or headset.