

DSE Employee Guidance

DSE Helpful Hints

For your workstation setup

Arms relaxed by your side



Balanced head, not leaning forward



Screen approximately arm's length from you



Top of screen about eye level



Always remember to move throughout your working day to promote good health.

Sit back in chair ensuring good back support



Forearms parallel to desk



Feet flat on floor or on a foot rest



Space behind knee



Display Screen Equipment

The ill-health effects associated with display screens include the following.

- Upper limb disorders, collectively known as musculoskeletal disorders, such as carpal tunnel syndrome. Symptoms include numbness, tingling or aching of the hands, fingers and limbs.
- Aches and pains (back, shoulder, neck or wrist aches).

The risk of suffering from these conditions depends on the working environment, how the workstation is set up, how it is used and how the work is organised. Unsafe uses of display screens include:

A properly set up and adjusted workstation is important to general health and long-term well-being. There is no single, perfect workstation arrangement that suits every user or any one job. Each individual will need to adjust it to their own specific needs and the work they are doing.

- Working with poor posture
- Working too long without a break or change of position
- Poor working environment
- Poor management of workload

Using display screen equipment is a regular activity in the workplace. Consider the following:

The Environment

- Ensure the lighting is adequate
- Ensure the temperature and humidity levels are adequate (Is the office temperature at least 16 degrees Celsius, and 13 degrees in factory areas?)
- Ensure you do not cause significant noise affecting fellow colleagues
- Ensure there is sufficient space to allow a change in position

Workstation

- Adjust the height of the work chair to suit your needs
- Ensure the chair is stable, in good condition, and has 5 feet
- Ensure you can rest your feet flat on the floor whilst at your workstation or use a footrest.
- Ensure there is adequate space around and beneath the desk for comfort and if necessary, you have access to a document holder

Adjusting the Chair to the Correct Position

- Seat height and tilt. Adjust the height of the chair's seat so that the forearms are about horizontal with the keyboard. Adjust the tilt (if the seat has this feature) so that the thighs are horizontal, and the feet are flat on the floor or the footrest. The aim is to rest the weight on the buttocks, not on the thighs.
- Back pad. The back pad may or may not be independently adjustable – adjust it to support the lower back so it fits the natural inward curve of the spine. Adopt an upright posture with an erect head and relaxed shoulders but avoid a rigid posture. Frequently varying position helps avoid stiffness, but always return to a healthy upright position.
- Arm rests, if present on the chair, should not interfere with the keying and should allow the chair under the desk. If possible, adjust them to suit you. If they cause problems, report this to your manager or supervisor.
- Try to avoid using the arm rests during keying – use them between tasks.
- Chair position. When positioning the chair, it is important to allow enough room under the desk for changes in position. You may want to stretch or cross your legs during the day or move your chair to work on another part of the desk.
- Make sure wrists are in a relaxed position.

Ensuring Good Posture

- Adopt a relaxed but not rigid position – change position regularly.
- Do not remain fixed. Regular changes of position are important – move about and change position, but always return to an upright posture.
- Practice good posture. It can take a while to learn or to change bad habits. It may cause some back or shoulder ache to start with as muscles get used to new positions

Equipment

- Adjust the contrast and brightness on the monitor and ensure the image is flicker free
- Ensure the monitor can swivel so you do not experience any reflection or glare
- Ensure the screen height is comfortable
- Make sure there is enough space in front of the keyboard to adopt the correct typing posture
- Only use the keyboard if the characters are easily identifiable
- Keep the screen clean.
- Face the screen with the head in a natural position. Adjust the screen so that the top is just below the eyeline. Touch typists may prefer to face a document holder and have the screen to one side. Either way is suitable providing it means there are reduced head movements.
- Keep everything required for the job close at hand to avoid twisting, stretching, reaching or leaning.
- Sitting at a desk all day can be hard on a body. To remain supple and prevent stiffness there are some simple exercises that can help prevent the onset of fatigue and aches and pains, loosen muscles and maintain flexibility.



- Warm up. Just before starting work, flex the fingers and wrists. Rub your hands together to warm up the muscles.
- Eyes. Regularly look away from the screen at objects in the far distance, either at the extremes of the workplace or outside if possible.
- Neck. Face straight ahead, slowly turn the head one way then the other. Roll your head from side to side.
- Shoulders. Shrug the shoulders and release.
- Arms. Reach the arms straight over the head and stretch.
- Back. Move slightly forward on the chair, straighten up raising your chest up and out. Hold for a few seconds, and then relax.
- Wrists and hands. Flex and rotate the wrists, spread the fingers as wide as possible and hold for a few seconds.
- Repeat the above exercises a few times

Procedural Controls

- Ensure you are aware of the procedure for obtaining eye and eyesight tests
- Take a 5 minute break from your VDU within every hour of continuous use
- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day to avoid dehydration

Occupational Health

Contact your supervisor immediately if you suffer from:

- Aches and pains to upper limbs
- Headaches
- Focusing difficulties