Ergonomics

As we transition back to working in office environments after a period of remote work, it's essential to address the ergonomic concerns that may arise. Ergonomics, the science of designing workspaces to fit people, plays a pivotal role in ensuring health, safety, and productivity. This report aims to provide guidance on ergonomic best practices to support employees as they complete their tasks.

Understanding Ergonomics

Ergonomics focuses on adapting tools and tasks to fit employees, aiming to prevent injuries and create a healthier, more productive workplace. Common musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) include carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, and tension neck syndrome.

Common Ergonomic Issues

During remote work, employees may have improvised their workstations, leading to potential ergonomic issues. Some common problems include:

1. Poor posture due to improper chair height or lack of lumbar support.

2. Strain on the neck and shoulders from looking down at a laptop screen for extended periods.

3. Inadequate keyboard and mouse placement, leading to wrist strain.

4. Insufficient lighting causing eye strain and fatigue.

5. Limited movement and physical activity throughout the workday.

Ergonomic Recommendations

To address these issues and promote a healthy work environment, employees should consider the following ergonomic recommendations:

1. **Adjust Workstation Setup:**

- Ensure that your chair provides adequate lumbar support and can be adjusted to the correct height to maintain a neutral posture.

- Position your monitor at eye level, about an arm's length away, to reduce strain on your neck and eyes.

- Use an external keyboard and mouse to maintain a relaxed posture and minimize wrist strain.

- Keep frequently used items within easy reach to avoid unnecessary stretching or twisting.

2. **Take Regular Breaks:**

- Incorporate short breaks into your work routine to stand up, stretch, and move around.

- Follow the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds to reduce eye strain.

3. **Improve Lighting and Environment:**

- Position your workstation to minimize glare from windows or overhead lights.

- Adjust the brightness and contrast of your monitor to comfortable levels.

- Consider using task lighting to illuminate specific work areas adequately.

4. **Promote Movement and Activity:**

- Alternate between sitting and standing throughout the day, if possible, using a height-adjustable desk or workstation.

- Engage in stretching exercises or ergonomic microbreaks to relieve muscle tension and improve circulation.

Ergonomic Evaluations and Assessments

Trained ergonomic specialists are available in some workplaces to assist with adjustments and identify concerns to assist employees who have a medical need or have physical variations that may impact the employee's ability to perform their tasks.

Procedures for requesting ergonomic adjustments or assessments are outlined in the document below, including the requirement for [medical indication](#) or verification from a manager for an ergonomic assessment.

- **Procedures on Requesting an Ergonomic Assessment**

Office Equipment and Ergonomic Resources

Office workstations are equipped with two monitors, an adjustable ergonomic chair, and a proper work surface, which may be a fixed or height-adjustable desk. Employees are responsible for bringing in their daily equipment such as laptops, keyboards, mice, and headsets. It is essential to use a carrying bag that suits ergonomic needs and is appropriate for the equipment carried. Considerations When Choosing a Bag to Carry Equipment to and From the Workplace includes information about the different types of ergonomic bags available and how to acquire them.

Resources are available to support employees in assessing ergonomic needs:

- Self-adjustment tools and video series

- Online training on injury prevention

- Resources for managers to address ergonomic concerns (including procedures for requesting ergonomic workstation adjustments and ergonomic assessments).

Employees should arrange their workstation in line with ergonomic principles. Resources are available to support employees, including self-adjustment tools, online training on injury prevention, and resources for managers to address ergonomic concerns. If an individual has specific ergonomic or accommodation needs, they should discuss them with their manager.

Consult the Adapting and Adjusting your Computer Workstation and Ergonomic Tips for Employees for ways to help set up your workstation and more.

Ergonomic Reference Tools and Related Links

- Ergonomic Guideline (PDF, 1 MB)

- Ergonomic Technical Standards (PDF, 602 KB)

- Accessible Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

- Duty to Accommodate

- [Disability Management](#)

- [Ergonomic Coach Toolkit](#)

Conclusion

 Prioritizing ergonomics is crucial for maintaining employee health, comfort, and productivity as we return to the office. By utilizing available resources and following ergonomic best practices, employees can create workspaces that support their well-being and contribute to overall job satisfaction. Collaboration with managers and access to ergonomic evaluations ensure that individual needs are addressed effectively.

ESDC is committed to providing a safe and ergonomic work environment for all employees, and we encourage everyone to take proactive steps to optimize their workspace for maximum comfort and efficiency.