FACT SHEET

Well-being

*About this tool*

**PURPOSE:** To provide answers to frequently asked questions, address common myths and offer best practices on various well-being topics

**AUDIENCE:** Employees of all levels who are looking for information on ergonomics, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and duty to accommodate, in the context of GCworkplace

**USE:**

* in presentations to employees
* in emails
* on internal websites
* in blog posts

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## Frequently asked questions

* **How will ergonomic needs be met across all workpoints?**
* Ergonomics will be factored into the design for all workpoints; they will be intuitive, easy and simple to use. Activity-based working environments encourage employees to move to different workpoints throughout the day and are less likely to encourage sedentary activities. Training and information on the various ergonomic settings will be made available to everyone.

[List the type of ergonomic accommodations your organization will adopt as part of your modernization project (height adjustable desks, ergonomic chairs, articulating monitor arms, etc.) and when these accommodations will be put into effect.]

* **Where can I find information on how to adjust a workpoint to my preference?**
* To familiarize yourself with the office ergonomics guidelines and principles, please consult the website [add link to info that is available to your organization]. Also, make sure you have taken the mandatory online ergonomics training, as required by your organization.
* **Where can I find more information on ergonomics and duty to accommodate?**
* If you are concerned about an individual ergonomic need or a specific accommodation need, you must discuss it with your manager. There are departmental resources available (e.g. Occupational Health and Safety, Disability Management Program, etc.) to provide advice and guidance to managers and employees related to these individual situations.
* **I already have a desk chair that is comfortable and suits my needs. Can I bring it with me?**
* Individual health and safety needs will be managed on a case by case basis, through the duty to accommodate policy. Each workstation will be equipped with an ergonomic chair. If you believe you have a requirement to keep your current chair, please discuss it with your manager.

[Include additional information as required].

* **How will individual health and safety needs be managed in an unassigned environment?**
* Individual health and safety needs will be managed on a case by case basis, through the duty to accommodate policy. If you believe you have a requirement for an exception to the unassigned desk environment, please discuss it with your manager.
* **What are the plans regarding any duty to accommodate requirements in an unassigned environment?**
* Nothing changes with regards to our responsibilities related to duty to accommodate in an unassigned environment. We will continue to meet our obligations for medically supported duties to accommodate.
* **Given the open environment, how is the additional noise going to be managed?**
* Activity-based working environments generally include three functional zones in which more interactive, noise-generating workpoints are grouped together and away from quiet individual workpoints in order to manage acoustics and better support concentration and collaboration.
* **How will first aiders and floor wardens be identified in an unassigned seating area?**
* First aiders and floor wardens can identify themselves with a plastic card/flag/pin that travels with them when they set up where they work on any given day. By increasing the amount of volunteers for these roles, the likelihood or potential for a first aider or floor warden to not be easily identified will decrease.

[This information may not apply to your organization, so edit as required. Another solution can also be identified.]

## Myth busters

| **“I won’t have access to my ergonomic furniture.”** |
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| If you already have an ergonomic chair, you may be able to keep it if the new chairs do not meet your needs. Your chair would need to be stored, in a dedicated area out of high-traffic zones when not in use. [This information may not apply to your organization, so edit as required. Another solution can also be identified.] | *Tips** *All workstations have height-adjustable desks and ergonomic chairs that should meet your needs; give them a try!*
* *Try different workpoints to get a feel for the ones you prefer and are the most productive at.*
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| **“It will be too noisy for me to concentrate and finish my work.”** |
| An integral part of offering choice of work settings is the ability for you to choose your preferred level of ambient sound and activity. By including three functional zones, each GCworkplace environment regroups more interactive, noise-generating workpoints together and away from quiet individual workpoints in order to manage acoustics and better support concentration and collaboration. | *Tips** *Choose your workpoint based on the activities you need to accomplish and personal preference of ambient noise level.*
* *Set your instant messaging software status to “do not disturb” to inform colleagues when you need to concentrate.*
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| **“My workplace will not meet accessibility or ergonomic requirements”** |
| In a GCworkplace environment, all furnishings and equipment are selected to accommodate a range of ergonomic needs including height, width and angle adjustability, thereby reducing the need for common ergonomic accommodations of the past. Items such as power receptacles are installed at counter or desk height for easy accessibility without the need to “overstretch” to reach devices.  | *Tips** *Assigning employees to workstations for ergonomic requirements is avoided where possible, as it limits the functionality of the workplace for those individuals.*
* *If you have specific accessibility or ergonomic requirements that the standard workplace cannot meet, the duty to accommodate principals apply.*
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| **“Being in an open office will negatively impact my mental health”**  |
| Both mental and physical health are areas of increased focus for the Government of Canada and its employees. In the broader workplace context, a work culture that encourages **mobility**, enabling employees to work from the location that suits their work―whether that be in the office, at home or another location―can **reduce stress** and enable better balance between work and personal activities. The activity-based working design solution focuses on improving access to **privacy** as it is an important element of mental health and wellbeing. | *Tips** *Move around throughout the day based on your tasks and preferences.*
* *You know how you work best and what type of setting you are more comfortable in. Mobility and flexibility options are available to you in the new workplace; discuss with your manager what works best for you!*
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## Best practices

| **Change it up―move around throughout the day** |
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| The design of the space takes into consideration the different activities and the needs of users (physical, emotional, cognitive). Use the various workpoint options throughout your day―stand up, sit down, move around!  | *Tips** *It can be as simple as getting up to throw something in the garbage!*
* *Why not schedule a “walking meeting” with a colleague?*
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| **Take the required ergonomic training**  |
| Talk to your manager to learn more about the mandatory online ergonomics training. One of the best ways to avoid injuries is to understand workplace ergonomics. | *Tips** *Following this training, you will be able to set-up any workpoint based on your personal needs.*
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