

Safety Tips

Safety Tips for Computer Users



Working at a computer all day may seem an unlikely place to get injured, but even office work can take a toll on your body. Here are some tips to help you feel better and work safely at the computer.

- To avoid eyestrain and muscle tension, your computer monitor should be about an arm's length from your eyes and at, or slightly below, eye level. You should use a document stand for source materials and place it at the same height and distance as the monitor. Make sure you blink frequently.
- Office workers are susceptible to repetitive strain injuries like Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. To avoid this, keep your keyboard low. If you have a wrist rest, use it to help maintain a neutral, relaxed wrist position and to prevent the wrist from bending upwards or downwards. Do not pound computer keys. Use a light touch.
- Hold your mouse lightly and click it without force. Use it in the most neutral position for you – with your shoulders down (no hunching, shrugging, or elevation) and without having to reach for it. Try using the mouse less by learning keyboard shortcuts.
- Your shoulders should not be raised or tensed. Solve this by lowering your keyboard, mouse and if possible, your chair armrests.
- Sitting at a desk does not mean your body must be still. Avoid sitting in the same position for prolonged periods—take occasional short stretch breaks away from the computer. If possible, vary your duties throughout the day so that you are able to get away from your desk and computer from time to time.
- Adjust your chair for maximum comfort. Sit back in your chair and use the backrest. Tilt the backrest or use a lumbar cushion to support your lower back. Your feet should rest firmly on the floor. If necessary, use a footrest.

Try these simple exercises to ease the strain on hand, wrist arm and shoulder muscles.

- **For your hands:** make a fist and hold it for a few seconds. Then stretch out all of your fingers as wide as possible. Repeat five times. Do both hands.
- **For your wrists:** slowly circle your wrist in one direction. Repeat that ten times in both directions. Do both wrists.
- **For your shoulders:** do shoulder rolls to help release tightness in the shoulders and upper arms.

Ergonomics aren't your only concern when working at a computer.

- Protect yourself from trips and falls by bundling and securing electrical cords and wires under your desk, so your feet don't get caught up in them.
- Avoid electrical hazards by only plugging low voltage equipment such as computers into surge protectors.

DISCLAIMER: This Safety Tips Sheet is being provided for educational purposes only and addresses common reasons for accidents. It is not intended to imply fault or negligence on the part of any employee. It is the law, policy, and intent of Nassau BOCES to provide a safe and healthful workplace. However, the basic responsibility for safety and health rests with all BOCES employees. The measures contained herein can help employees to ensure their safety.

Although the information and recommendations contained in this Safety Tips Sheet have been compiled from sources believed to be reliable, the Office of the Nassau BOCES Safety Coordinator makes no guarantee as to the correctness, sufficiency or completeness of such information or recommendations. Other or additional safety measures may be required under particular circumstances.

For more information call the Safety Hotline 396-2400.