

Flexible Work Arrangement Safety Checklist

The employee is responsible for ensuring a clean, safe, and ergonomically sound home/work office as a condition of flexible work arrangements. The employee should review this checklist prior to the start of the flexible work arrangement.

WORK SITE:

- Employee agrees to maintain a clearly defined workspace that is clean, free from distractions and obstructions, and is in ergonomically sound condition.
- The work area is adequately illuminated with lighting directed toward the side or behind the line of vision, not in front or above it.
- Supplies and equipment (both RIT and employee-owned) are in good condition.
- The area is well ventilated and heated.
- Storage is organized to minimize risks of fire.
- All extension cords have grounding conductors.
- Electrical enclosures (switches, outlets, receptacles, and junction boxes) have tight-fitting covers or plates.
- Phone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires are secured underneath a desk or along baseboards.
- Surge protectors are used for computers, fax machines, and printers.
- Heavy items are securely placed on sturdy stands close to walls.
- Computer components are kept out of direct sunlight and away from heaters.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS:

- Emergency phone numbers (hospital, fire department and police department) are posted at the alternate work site.
- A first aid kit is easily accessible and replenished as needed.
- There is a working smoke detector in the alternate workplace.
- Portable fire extinguishers are easily accessible and serviced as needed.

ERGONOMICS:

- Desk, chair, computer, and other equipment are of appropriate design and arranged to eliminate strain on all parts of the body, in consideration of the Office Ergonomics at Home Checklist. (See below)

Office Ergonomics at Home Checklist

Ergonomics is matching the tasks, tools and environment to the person. Influences outside of the workplace and individual differences have an impact on discomfort levels, as well as the work environment. Practicing good ergonomics can increase your comfort and safety, increase morale by reducing the risk factors: repetition, force, awkward postures, contact pressure, environmental and personal. Additionally, wellness activities such as exercise, healthy eating habits, and stress reduction can reduce the risk for ergonomic injury.

What is Neutral Posture¹

"Neutral Posture" refers to the resting position of each joint-the position in which there is the least tension or pressure on nerves, tendons, muscles and bones. It is also the position in which muscles are at their resting length-neither contracted nor stretched.

Fingers

The fingers are gently curved. They are not spread apart. They are neither fully straightened out (extended) nor tightly curled (flexed).

Wrist

The wrist is in line with the forearm. It is neither bent up nor bent down. It is not bent towards the thumb or towards the little finger.

Forearm

The forearm rests with the thumb up. It is not rotated to make the palm face down or up.

Elbow

The elbow angle between forearm and upper arm is close to a right angle (90 degrees) or extension (up to 110 degrees).

Upper Arm

The upper arm hangs straight down, elbows at your side. It is not elevated to the side, pulled across in front of the body, raised to the front nor raised towards the back.

Shoulder

The shoulders are neither hunched up nor pulled down, and not pulled forward or back.

Neck

The head is balanced on the spinal column, ears over your shoulders. It is not tilted forward, back or to either side. It is not rotated to the left or right.

Back

The spine naturally assumes an S-shaped curve. The upper spine is bent gently out (shoulder blades pressed back); the lower spine is bent gently in. The spine is not twisted, and it is not leaning to the side or forward.

Lower Body

The lower body naturally assumes a neutral, fetal position-hip and knee joints somewhat bent. Thus, both seated and standing postures involve deviations from neutral posture.

Any position, comfortable or not, can become fatiguing. Limit the amount of time for any task by providing a change in posture every 30 minutes. Consider the following when using your computer at home:

SEATING:

- Upright:
 - Avoid leaning forward and closing the hip angle
 - Maintain back support
 - Seat height allows upper legs parallel to the floor and feet supported
 - Provide a gap on the back of the legs to open the knee angles and reduce pressure
 - Avoid seats with hard surfaces

- Reclining:
 - Neck/head is supported, not craning head forward
 - Ears are positioned over the shoulders
 - If shoulders are supported, avoid shrugging or leaning to one side

MONITOR:

- Avoid tilting the head face up:
- Seated eye height, looking straight ahead, is at the toolbars
- Multifocal lens wearers viewing through the bottom of glasses, lower the monitor
- Multifocal lens wearers viewing through the top of glasses, increase the distance
- Height avoids a chin to chest neck position
- Position approximately arm's length distance, if small font pull closer or increase the size, if large or two monitors increase the distance and font
- Position perpendicular to overhead lighting, lamps or windows to reduce glare

KEYBOARD/MOUSE:

- Avoid pressure from hard/sharp surface edges on the forearm/wrist
- Height and angle allow elbow bends at right angles or greater
- Height ensures wrists are not bent, retract the keyboard feet
- Position on the same level surface to reduce over reaching or leaning forward
- Avoid a tight grip on mouse or pounding on keys
- Use a symmetrical mouse allowing alternating hand use

WRITING SURFACE:

- Provide leg room for movement under the surface
- Height avoids a chin to chest neck position, lift papers off the surface periodically
- Provide full forearm support or work at the surface to avoid pressure from hard/sharp edge

WELLNESS:

- Control stress: moderate stress can keep you be alert and engaged. Too much stress can interfere with thinking clearly and disrupt relaxation. Take time for yourself.
- Physical Activity: Allow a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate activity per day.