

## ERGONOMICS: Work safe, work smart



How active are you at work each day? Are you taking breaks beyond the occasional walk to the coffee machine? Did you know that by just sitting and working all day, you might be putting yourself at risk for injury?

### What Is Ergonomics?

Ergonomics is the study of people at work—how we sit, stand, move, and stretch (or don't). It's about finding ways to reduce the chance of injuries and disorders from things like bad posture and repeated tasks.<sup>1</sup> Here are a few ways to be more ergonomically aware, and make your workday and workspace safer, and better for you.

### The Healthy Desk | Quick tips to make sure your workspace gets an ergonomic thumbs-up.<sup>2</sup>

**Chair:** Adjust the height so that your feet rest flat on the floor or on a footrest. Your thighs should be parallel to the floor. Your arms should rest gently on the armrests with your shoulders relaxed.

**Telephone:** If you frequently talk on the phone and type or write at the same time, place your phone on speaker or use a headset rather than cradling the phone between your head and neck.



**Monitor:** Place your monitor directly in front of you, about an arm's length away. The top of the screen should be at or slightly below eye level.

**Computer:** Put your mouse within easy reach on the same surface as your keyboard. When typing or using your mouse, keep your wrists straight, your upper arms close to your body, and your hands at or slightly below the level of your elbows.

(continued)



## The In-Work Workout

The Mayo Clinic recommends doing these easy stretches several times throughout the day to help keep your muscles from feeling sore and tight.<sup>3</sup>

### Shoulders

1. Place one hand under your elbow.
2. Lift your elbow and stretch it across your chest. Don't rotate your body.
3. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
5. Repeat with the other arm.

### Side Neck

1. Face straight ahead.
2. Tilt your head so your ear moves toward your shoulder.
3. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
5. Tilt your head to the other side and repeat.

### Chest

1. Place your hands behind your head.
2. Squeeze your shoulder blades together, bring your elbows as far back.
3. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
5. Repeat.

### Thighs

1. Stand up straight, placing one hand on a chair or desk for stability.
2. Grab one ankle (or your pant leg) and bring it up toward your buttock. Stay upright, and keep your back straight and your knees parallel to one another.
3. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
5. Repeat the stretch with your other leg.

**For more information on ergonomics, visit the following resources:**

**Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention**

[cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

**Mayo Clinic**  
[mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)

Visit **[ahealthyme.com](http://ahealthyme.com)** and be sure to sign up for an ahealthyme account!

1. [cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ergonomics](http://cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ergonomics)

2. [mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/office-ergonomics/art-20046169](http://mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/office-ergonomics/art-20046169)

3. [mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/multimedia/stretching/sls-20076525](http://mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/multimedia/stretching/sls-20076525)

