ERGONOMICS IN THE OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

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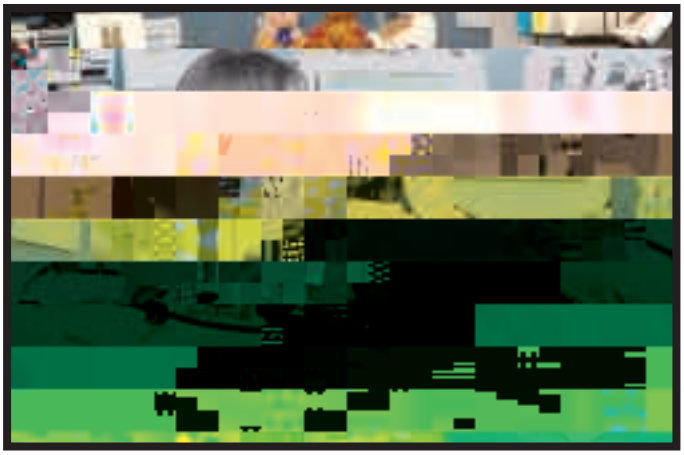
Ergonomics in the Office: A Guide to Proper:



WORKSTATION SETUP

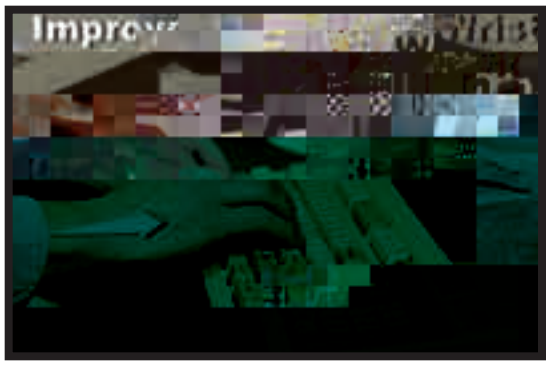
The objective of good workstation design is to allow the worker to adopt the comfortable dynamic sitting posture that will minimize fatigue and discomfort. *Dynamic sitting posture* is the organization of the work area, tasks, and equipment to facilitate and/or encourage postural changes throughout the work shift. No single posture can remain comfortable if maintained for a long period. In fact, studies have shown that we can only sit for one hour before the onset of muscle fatigue. Each arrangement may be unique to the individual worker based on his or her tasks, how the work is organized, the workerôs size, and working preferences.

Workers should also be provided with education and training related to workstation design and layout, so that they may optimize the adjustment and arrangement of their workstations.

Height adjustability of chairs and tables may be necessary for various types of tasks. In terms of user comfort, adjustability of furniture and video display terminals (VDTs) is particularly important when it involves users who perform prolonged seated tasks and workstations that must accommodate multiple users.

Keyboards, in combination with the work surface and chair, should permit users to

The user should be careful not to increase or decrease keyboard angle to an extent that will place the wrists in an awkward bent posture. Positioning a wristrest device along the front edge of the keyboard also helps the user to avoid wrist extension and/or mechanical compression.



Alternative keyboard designs as shown below can help to promote neutral posture of the hand and wrist.

If the mouse is used for long periods of time, the forearm or base of the hand should be supported by a wristrest to minimize static effort of the shoulder muscles. The wristrest can also assist the user in achieving neutral wrist posture and in avoiding mechanical compression at the wrist which can compromise blood þow.

Workers should be encouraged to rest their ýngers on the mouse and button, rather than holding them in the air, and not to hold the mouse too tightly. When moving the mouse, workers should be encouraged to keep the wrist straight and in front of the shoulder.

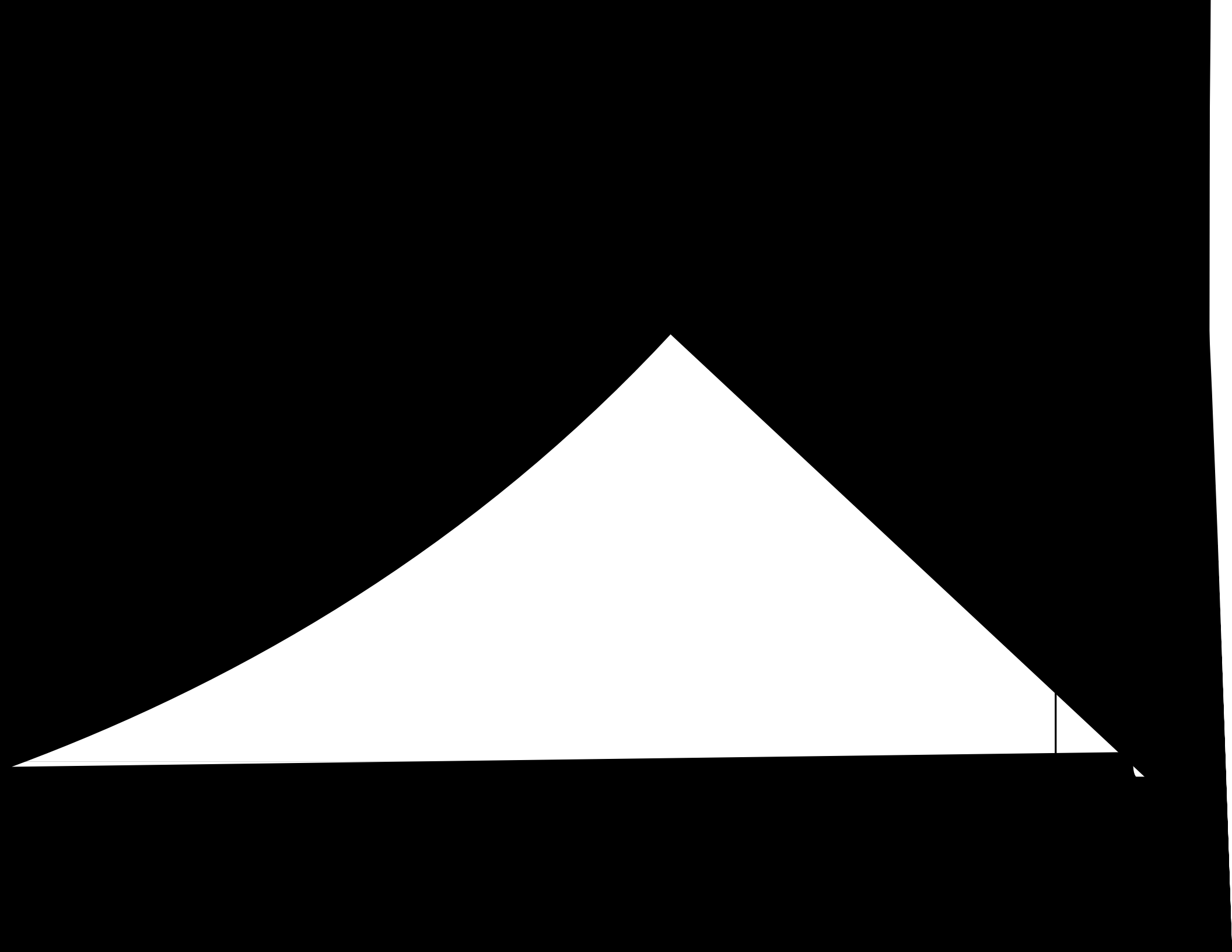
Alternating the mouse from the dominant hand to the nondominant hand on a regular basis provides a rest period for frequently overused muscle groups.

Wristrests, or wrist supports, should be provided to allow the user to rest the palms/wrists on a cushioned area either between keystrokes, during typing, or while operating a mouse.

Wristrests assist the user in achieving neutral wrist postures and in avoiding mechanical compression which results from resting the palms/wrists on a hard surface.

Wristrests that are too ýrm may improve wrist posture, however, they could compromise blood þow.

The main considerations when choosing work surfaces are the tasks or activities to be performed, the equipment to be accommodated, and, in multiple-user situations, the adjustability r ς Mt



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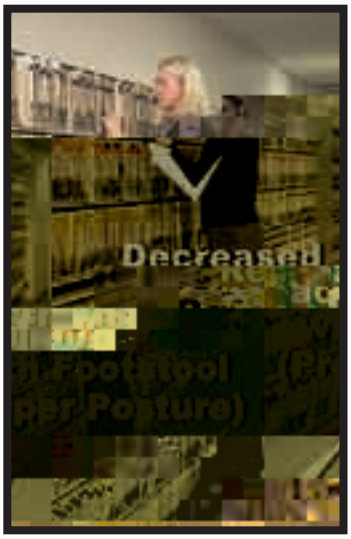
Reaching into vertical ýling cabinets and upper shelving in ýle libraries can cause workers to reach with the arm above shoulder height and the back in an awkward posture. Portable steps and stools allow the worker to achieve the tasks while maintaining acceptable work postures. These devices must provide stability and be capable of supporting the workersô weight safely.



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