

Keyboards, Mice and Other Accessories

When using a keyboard and mouse, your upper arms should be relaxed and by your side, your elbows bent at a right angle (90 degrees), and your wrists straight. Your body will assume this posture naturally if your keyboard and mouse are at resting elbow height.



Your Keyboard

Your keyboard should lie flat or be angled slightly away from you, not propped up on keyboard legs. If an adjustable keyboard tray is used, the edge platform should be parallel your forearms.

Ergonomic keyboards are designed to allow the hands to be in a more neutral posture and reduce repetitive strain while typing. The effectiveness of ergonomic keyboards depends on the user and the type of work being performed. Early work has shown that these keyboards do promote neutral wrist and hand posture, but available research does not provide conclusive evidence that these alternative keyboards reduce the risk of discomfort or injury. Since purchasing a keyboard is a matter of preference, you should consider a trial period of approximately one month.

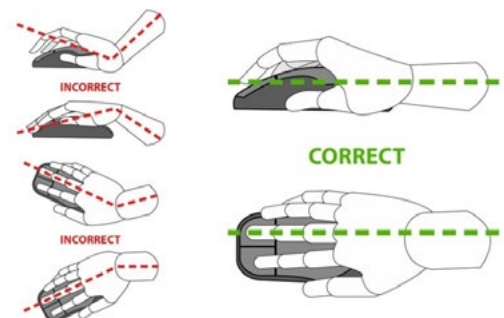


Your Mouse

The mouse is an important tool for any computer task. Your mouse should fit your hand appropriately so your hand is in a relaxed position.

When using your mouse, do you pinch your fingers? Your mouse may be too small! Do you have to spread your fingers apart to use the mouse? Your mouse may be too big! Pinching can lead to fatigue or discomfort in the fingers and hand, while over-gripping can lead to discomfort in the wrist and elbow.

Make sure your mouse is at the same level as your keyboard and easy to reach with your arm relaxed at your side. Finally, remember to move your mouse with your entire arm. Avoid resting your wrist on the surface and moving only your hand (see image to the right).



Palm Supports

Wrist rests are designed to raise the **palm** to keep the wrists in a neutral position. They are not meant to be positioned under the wrists where the nerve and blood vessels are located as this will cause pressure on the underside of the wrists and compress the tendons, blood vessels, and nerve.



Palm supports are not to be used while actively typing, but rather while resting or during short breaks. Resting your palms on the support while typing can place the wrists in an extended posture and limit mobility to the keys, causing the small muscles of the fingers to be overworked and overextended. The hands should be able to float over the keys while keyboard work is being performed (see image below). This also applies to the mouse and other input devices which have a palm rest.



Document Holders

When using a document holder, place it between your keyboard and monitor. This will minimize refocusing when your eyes go from one to the other. A vertical documents holder should be positioned immediately next to the monitor for the same reason. If you spend the majority of your time reading from a paper copy, you may want to position your vertical holder directly in front and place your monitor to the side.

Phone and Web Conference

Keep your phone within easy reach. If you use it while keying or writing, use a headset or a speakerphone to avoid cradling the phone in your neck. Using a wedge on the receiver is not considered acceptable, as it still requires the individual to raise the shoulder and bend the neck in an awkward posture.

