

Telcom's Quarterly Safety Mailer

2nd Quarter 2010

Office Ergonomics



Many workers think that just because they work in what appears to be a safe environment that they are safe from injury, especially in an office where the sharpest instrument is a letter opener and you don't have to work around heavy, dangerous equipment. Unfortunately, an office workplace can be a breeding ground for non-accident injuries.

A non-accident injury is an injury that results from normal activities that a person does as a requirement of their job. The most common cause of non-accident injuries in an office environment includes poor body posture, long sessions of working while seated or standing in one position, and repetitive motions. The biggest culprit for the office worker when it comes to non-accident injuries is their workstation mechanics—usually a chair that doesn't provide proper back support, a mouse that causes fingers to cramp, and/or a keyboard that doesn't support the wrist—all used while staring at a computer screen that is not adjusted to the appropriate height. All of these ergonomically incorrect office items can cause back, neck, and wrist injuries.

The human body is designed to sit comfortably in one position for a maximum of 20 - 30 minutes, where as many people spend eight, ten, or even more hours at their desk every day. Non-accidental injuries, such as, carpal tunnel syndrome, neck strain, lower back pain and radiating pain to the legs caused by injuries to the back, can be avoided by the simple use of office ergonomics like the following: Keeping your head back, chin tucked with your ears, shoulders, and hips aligned; Using headphones and not cradling the phone between your head and shoulder; Keeping your elbows at your side with a slightly more than 90 degree bend; Having a fully adjustable chair with lumbar support; Adjusting your chair so your hips bend slightly more than 90 degrees with your feet flat on the floor; Making sure your keyboard and mouse are at the same height as elbows; Positioning your monitor so that the top 1/3 of the screen is at eye level; and Taking breaks roughly every 30 minutes to stretch or stand up. These are just a few free things that you can do to help prevent non-accident injuries. There are several products on the market, such as ergonomically correct keyboards, chairs, etc. that could be beneficial if correcting your posture and workstation doesn't help.

As a reminder of this important information, we've included a ergonomic workstation mouse pad, which should help prevent you from developing a non-accident injury. And although we have only covered office ergonomics in this safety mailer, proper ergonomic practices pertain to every work field. For more information regarding ergonomics that pertain to you, visit www.OSHA.gov. For our policyholders, we provide several safety videos regarding ergonomics that can be shipped to you at no cost, if you would like to request a video or additional mouse pads for your staff, please contact Tina Wynter at tmw@telcominsgrp.com.

