

5 Tips That Can Improve Your Wellness at Work

Did you know that your individual work-space could have drastic effects on your personal wellness and overall productivity?

Plugging away at your computer eight hours a day can take a toll on your body and before you know it, you have chronic neck, back or other issues.

Physical discomfort in the short and long term can result from an improper desk or computer screen setup, and fatigue and strain can take a toll on your performance.

You'd be amazed at what simple steps you can take to help you feel better while working and also result in improving your productivity and engagement in the office.

1. Increase your monitor height. The human head weighs 12-13 pounds! That's a lot of weight to support and it makes matters a whole lot worse when your monitor isn't at eye level. Most people look down at their computer screen. If so, your trapezius muscles are firing continuously and this is causing your neck and upper back to ache.

Workspaceology Guideline:

Your monitor should be positioned directly in front of you and at a comfortable viewing distance.

The Fix: For a quick fix, stack phone books or reams of paper under your monitor to prop it up and give it enough height so that you aren't looking up or down – just straight ahead. For a permanent fix, monitor arms provide adjustable heights that suit you perfectly.

2. Limit your laptop time. As pointed out in tip #1, the proper alignment between eye level and monitor height is necessary to eliminate neck, back and shoulder pain and long term damage. When your keyboard is connected directly to the monitor, it's impossible to have any comfort.

The Fix: If you use a laptop, connect an independent keyboard and mouse so that the laptop can function as a monitor. Then prop it up to the appropriate level.

3. Mouse the right way. Most people use the mouse that comes with their computer but those can cause wrist and joint pain. The proper mouse should allow for movement with the thumb while the other fingers lay dormant. The padding under your thumb is meant for pressure, not your wrist. If you rely on your wrist to control the mouse, it'll stifle blood flow and that's not a good idea.

Workspaceology Guideline: The mouse should be placed adjacent to the keyboard. Wrist needs to be lifted and thumb controls movement.

The Fix: Lift wrists to a level position and move the mouse with the upper hand muscle groups. This will alleviate strain and help prevent carpal tunnel syndrome.

4. The key to the keyboard. Most people position their keyboard on their desk and in front of their monitor, but there's cause to be concerned about this placement because it contributes to neck and shoulder pain.

Workspaceology Guideline: Make sure your upper arms and elbows are as close to the body and as relaxed as possible. Also your wrists should be as flat as possible (not bent up or down) and straight.

The Fix: Typically your desk isn't low enough to accommodate the most ideal position. Consider an adjustable keyboard tray to solve this challenge and reposition the tray to allow your wrists to be at a 90 to 110 degree angle.

5. Chair pose. Use a chair with built in back support. Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor and upright. That's right – no slouching allowed.

Workspaceology Guideline: Feet should be fully supported by a footrest or the floor. Back should be fully erect.

The Fix: Try an adjustable chair with back support. No one's body is the same and you'll need to customize your height-to-desk ratio specific to your needs. Discipline yourself to take regular standing/walking breaks. Blood flow is crucial to good health and work efficiency.



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