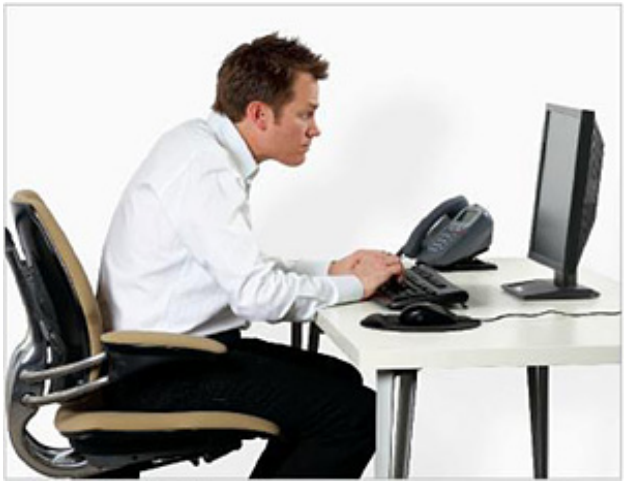
Is This Safe Posture for Keyboard Use?





What's wrong with this picture?

The worker in this picture is doing 3 things that increase his risk of a repetitive stress injury (RSI):

1. He's hunched over in a posture that places stress on his back, neck and shoulders
2. Because his wrists are anchored to the desk surface, he has to stretch his fingers and twists his wrists to reach the keys
3. Leaning his forearms against the desk creates contact stress

The Moral: The right posture is essential to avoiding carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis and other RSIs associated with keyboard work

3 Reasons to Pay Attention

1. More than 1 in 4 workers' compensation claims filed are for RSIs
2. Office workers who work in computer work stations suffer RSIs at a disproportionately high rate
3. Roughly 75% of office workers suffer pain in their neck, shoulders, wrists and back during the week, according to a recent survey of over 1,000 office workers

Safe Posture for Sitting at Computer Workstations



Don’t be like the worker in the picture. If you sit at a workstation all day, make sure you maintain an ergonomically neutral posture:

A Neutral Posture Means…

- **Hands**, **wrists**, and **forearms** are straight, in-line and roughly parallel to the floor;
- **Head** is level (or bent slightly forward), forward facing, balanced, and in-line with your torso;
- **Shoulders** are relaxed;
- **Upper arms** hang normally at the side of your body;
- **Elbows** stay close to the body and are bent between 90° and 120°;
- **Feet** are fully supported by the floor or a footrest if the desk height is not adjustable;
- **Back** is fully supported with appropriate lumbar support when you are sitting vertically or leaning back slightly;
- **Thighs** and **hips** are supported by a well-padded seat that is parallel to the floor;
- **Knees** are about the same height as your hips; and
- **Feet** are slightly forward.

Other Workstation Ergonomic Risk Factors

- Being too close to or far from your computer monitor—20 to 40 inches is optimal distance
- A computer monitor that’s tilted too far left or right—monitors should be tilted no more than 35° degrees to either side
- A monitor or keyboard that’s too high or too low to use in a neutral posture
- The amount of work surface on and clearance room beneath your work desk
- A desk or chair that’s either too high or too low
- Glare on your monitor
- Too much or too little light in your workstation