

BIRDWELL CLINIC PHYSIOTHERAPY

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WORKSTATION ADVICE TO PREVENT PAIN

Sitting incorrectly for prolonged periods puts a great strain on your back, neck and arms. It can cause postural pains such as low back pain, stiffness getting up from sitting, shoulder and neck ache and 'tennis' elbow pain. The symptoms come on gradually over weeks, months or years.

Therefore, it is important that your work station is set up correctly to encourage good posture and keep the strain on your body to a minimum. This will help to PREVENT posture related problems.

The most common causes of postural pains are:

- sitting in a slumped position
- poking your head forward to read the screen
- stretching your arms too far to reach equipment on your desk such as the mouse
- twisting to one side repeatedly
- staying in the same position for long periods of time

The following tips will help you set up your work station for your maximum comfort.

Adjust your chair so your thighs are just above your knees

Your arms should be by your side with elbows bent to 90 degrees. Your fingers should then rest comfortably on the middle row of the keyboard with your mouse within easy reach to the side of it.

Your back rest should be set at approximately 100 degrees, so you're not bolt upright. Get your bottom right to the back of the chair so that it supports your lower back in a neutral posture (see POSTURE AND YOUR BACK ADVICE SHEET).

Your feet should be in contact with the floor once you have correctly positioned yourself. If not you may need a footrest.

Make sure your chair is brought in close to the desk to avoid over stretching. If you have arms on your chair which prevent this then you may need to adjust them or change your chair

If you have to twist to the side of your computer to do paperwork, swivel on your chair do NOT twist from the spine.

Desk height: With your elbows flexed to 90 degrees your forearms should rest comfortably on your desk top.

Place other frequently used equipment and objects within functional easy reach so you avoid repetitive twisting movements.

Organise your desk so that you have enough space to comfortably carry out the various tasks in a day.

Use a document holder placed next to the screen when copying from a document or using it for reference. This will minimize awkward neck movements.

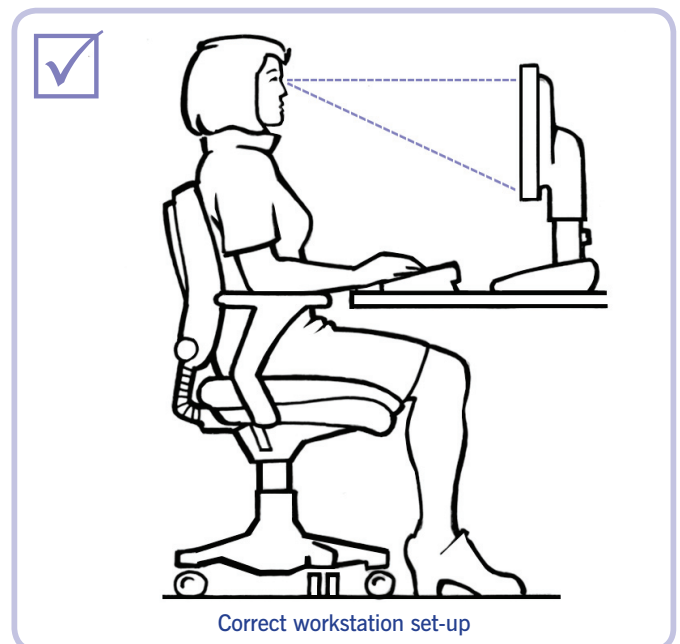
Other simple tips to prevent postural problems

Get out of your chair regularly every 20 minutes, and walk around.

Perform simple exercises while sitting such as, rolling your shoulders, arching your back and rotating your head from side to side.

Try to vary the tasks you do to avoid repetitive activities. If aches and pains persist, contact your physiotherapist to seek advice as to whether treatment will benefit you.

Remember – prevention is better than cure



Correct workstation set-up

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