10 TIPS FOR HEALTHY COMPUTER USE

How to use your computer can be a major cause of back, neck and shoulder pain. Poor posture while sitting at the computer as well as a lack of regular breaks and exercise can all contribute to the problem.

Here are some simple tips from the physiotherapists at Bayside Manipulative Physiotherapy on how to help prevent injuries when using your computer.

Get ready

1. Always sit in a good quality, adjustable and comfortable office chair. Pull your chair close to the desk and adjust the seat so that your elbows, hips and knees are bent at approximately 90 degrees. Your forearms should be parallel to or sloping down toward the floor. Use a footrest if necessary.

2. Adjust the backrest of your chair to support the curve in your lower back and to help keep you upright when typing. Relax your shoulders. We recommend the Back Care Centre on Anzac Highway who are seating specialists.

Get set

3. Sit up straight and position your computer screen at a comfortable viewing distance, generally at arm's length. Keep the top of the screen below eye level and directly in front of you. Don't use your screen positioned to one side.

4. Don't work from documents flat on the desk. Use a document holder set close to the screen at the same distance from your eyes or prop your work between the keyboard and screen.

5. Ensure your screen is easy to see. Eliminate reflections by adjusting and tilting the screen and ensure there is no light source directly behind it. Adjust the brightness control to suit.

Go easy on yourself

6. Don't use a notebook computer for extended periods. If this is unavoidable then check that the top o the screen is below eye level and plug in a mouse and a normal size keyboard. A laptop riser can be helpful.

7. Limit continuous computer use and take a break every 30 minutes to do some neck, wrist and shoulder stretches. Focus on a distant point to give your eyes a break. Get up and walk around every hour. Change tasks regularly to alter the load on your body.

8. Learn to touch type so you don't have to bend your head forward searching for the keys. Alternate between mouse and keyboard by varying your inputting tasks. Learn the function keys and short cut keys to reduce the amount of mouse use.

9. Maintain your general fitness. Keep yourself strong, active and flexible. Manage the stresses of work and study with a balance of exercise, relaxation and other stress management approaches. Ask about or Pilates exercise classes, which help you stretch and strengthen your achy muscles.

10. Take notice of early warnings. If you feel and ache or discomfort in any part of your body, check your posture, take a break and if the pain persists see one of our physiotherapists.

Check out our display or ask our reception staff for further ideas and information regarding suitable aides.