TAKE TIME FOR SAFETY

"Computer Ergonomics"

Trainer Outline

1. **This safety session will teach employees to:**
   - Recognize the ergonomic hazards of desk and computer work
   - Understand the precautions they need to take to prevent stresses, strains, and injuries
   - Work more comfortable, efficiently and safely

   Repetitive motion injury is the term used for injuries that result from repeating a motion over and over again. These injuries can occur from repetitive reaching, lifting, pushing and pulling. Body parts affected can include hands, arms, shoulders, knees and/or back.

2. **Even computer and other office work can be stressful to your body**
   - Organize your workstation to avoid over-reaching. Keep items that you use frequently closest to you.
   - Pay attention to your posture when you sit.
   - Avoid heavy lifting or awkward stretching or bending.
   - Learn how to reduce stress and strain on your body when doing computer work.

3. **Learn the basic rules of good sitting posture**
   - Keep your back comfortably straight while you work.
   - Use a small pillow to support your lower back if necessary.
   - Adjust the monitor so that you can work with your head level.
   - Your feet should be flat on the floor or supported by a footrest.
   - Your forearms, wrists and hands should be straight, not bent up, down or sideways.
   - Your chair should be adjustable so it will accommodate your body's needs.

4. **Avoid eyestrain when working on a computer**
   - Maintain a comfortable viewing distance from the screen. Typically, 25 to 30 inches suits most people.
   - The top of the screen should be just below eye level. Angle the screen slightly upward.
   - If you are a glasses wearer, you may need to adjust the screen so you are seeing through the proper part of your lenses.
   - Source documents should be at the same height as your monitor. Keep documents close to the monitor to avoid constant twisting and turning.
   - Position your monitor to minimize glare
   - Set screen brightness at low and the contrast at high to also to minimize glare
   - Keep the screen clean.

5. **Use correct technique for entering data**
   - Keep your upper arms and elbows close to your body, not extended outward.
   - Keep your wrists straight when you are keying.
   - If you have a padded wrist rest, use it only when you are not entering data.

6. **Take frequent breaks from keying to reduce muscle and eyestrain**
   - Get up and walk or stretch at least once an hour. This will use different muscles. Stretch and shake out your wrists and fingers
   - Walk to the printer, make phone calls, or do some copying or filing – anything that's a change from entering data
   - Give your eyes a 20/20/20 break. Every 20 minutes, focus on something at least 20 feet away and hold that focus for at least 20 seconds
   - Keep loose with stretching exercises
   - Do a few shoulder shrugs, arm circles, wrist circles, head and neck movements and body stretches
   - Repeat each exercise three to five times
7. **Discussion Points:**
   - Think about your own workstation and your own habits.
   - Can you think of changes you should make in the way your workstation is organized?
   - How you can improve your own daily routine?

8. **Conclusion:**
   Repetitive motion injuries can be painful and distract you from the task at hand. They can create physical problems ranging from minor fatigue, soreness and tingling, to a permanent disability that can prevent you from earning a living. The key is to recognize early warning signs and change your workstation to fit you.

9. **Test Your Knowledge**
   Ask your employees to take the Computer Ergonomics Quiz. By testing their knowledge, you can judge their understanding of good computer ergonomic practices and if further training on this subject is needed.

TAKE TIME FOR SAFETY

"Computer Ergonomics"

Quiz

Computer ergonomics quiz

1. **When you organize your workstation, keep frequently used items within easy reach.**
   a) True b) False

2. **Your feet should be flat on the floor or supported by a footrest.**
   a) True b) False

3. **For most people, a comfortable distance between their eyes and the computer monitor is 12 to 18 inches.**
   a) True b) False

4. **Documents you are referring to while working on the computer should be placed just above eye level, at half the distance between you and your monitor.**
   a) True b) False

5. **What is a 20/20/20/ break?**
   a) Taking a 20-minute coffee break every 20 minutes
   b) Focusing on something 20 feet away for 20 seconds
   c) Making a 20 second phone call every 20 minutes

6. **To reduce glare and eyestrain, adjust your computer's screen brightness to low and the contrast to high.**
   a) True b) False

7. **When working on a computer, adjust your chair so you sit with your back comfortably straight and your head level.**
   a) True b) False

8. **You should always rest your wrists on a wrist pad when you are keying.**
   a) True b) False

9. **Everybody's chairs should be set the same way.**
   a) True b) False

10. **When entering data, your forearms, wrists, and hands should be:**
    a) Bent up
    b) Bent down
    c) Straight

TAKE TIME FOR SAFETY

"Computer Ergonomics"

Quiz Answers

ANSWERS TO COMPUTER ERGONOMICS QUIZ

1. a. True.

2. a. True.

3. b. False. For most people, a comfortable distance between their eyes and the computer monitor is 25 to 30". There is no "one size fits all."

4. b. False. Documents you need to refer to when working on the computer should be placed slightly below eye level at the same distance from your eyes as the monitor.

5. b. Focusing on something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Do this about every 20 min.

6. a. True.

7. b. True.

8. False. You should rest your wrists on a padded wrist pad *only* when you are *not* keying.

9. b. False. Your chair should be adjusted according to *your* size and shape.

10. c. Straight.

TAKE TIME FOR SAFETY

"Computer Ergonomics"

Handout

Computer equipment checklist

- ☐ Position your monitor directly in front of you so that you do not have to twist your head, neck, or body to view the screen.
- ☐ Keep a comfortable viewing distance between your eyes and the monitor. (25 to 30 inches is suggested)
- ☐ Adjust the monitor so that you can work with your head level.
- ☐ Place source documents just below eye level, angled slightly upward, and at the same distance from your eyes as the monitor.
- ☐ Take appropriate steps to reduce glare on the screen.
- ☐ Adjust your chair so you can sit with your back comfortably straight and your head level.
- ☐ Allow your feet to rest flat on the floor or supported by a stable footrest.
- ☐ Keep your shoulders and upper arms perpendicular to the floor (not stretched forward) and relaxed (not elevated).
- ☐ Keep your upper arms and elbows close to your body, not extended outward.
- ☐ Use a padded wrist rest to prevent your wrists from resting on a sharp or hard edge. Use it when not keying.
- ☐ Give your eyes a break from time to time by refocusing on something at a distance.
- ☐ Give your body a break by changing positions a little about every 15 minutes.
- ☐ Stand up and stretch or walk around for one to two minutes every hour.