



# Beginners: Health & Safety

Prolonged computer use and poor posture can cause muscle strain and fatigue and can lead to repetitive strain injuries (RSI) to muscles, tendons, nerves and other soft tissues. To prevent injuries and strains it is important to follow some simple guidelines:

1. Sit back in your chair with your back straight, ensuring that your lower back is supported at all times.
2. Keep your legs at 90 degrees with your feet on the floor.
3. Sit squarely directly facing the monitor, so as not to twist your neck.
4. The monitor should be at your arm's length.
5. The monitor's screen should be just below eye level, so as to avoid tilting your head (Sit back in your chair, your middle finger should almost touch the centre of the screen) - **adjust the height of your chair** accordingly.
6. Keep your arms and elbows as close to the body and as relaxed as possible.
7. Centre the keyboard in front of the monitor. When using it, keep your wrists flat and straight - do not bend or twist them.
8. Do not move the mouse with your wrist. Move the mouse using your elbow as a pivot point! Keep your wrist flat and straight - no bending or twisting!
9. Give your eyes a break every 15 minutes. Look away from the monitor to something further away and blink your eyes rapidly for a few seconds to re-hydrate them.
10. Take a short break away from the computer every 30 to 60 minutes, and stretch your legs.

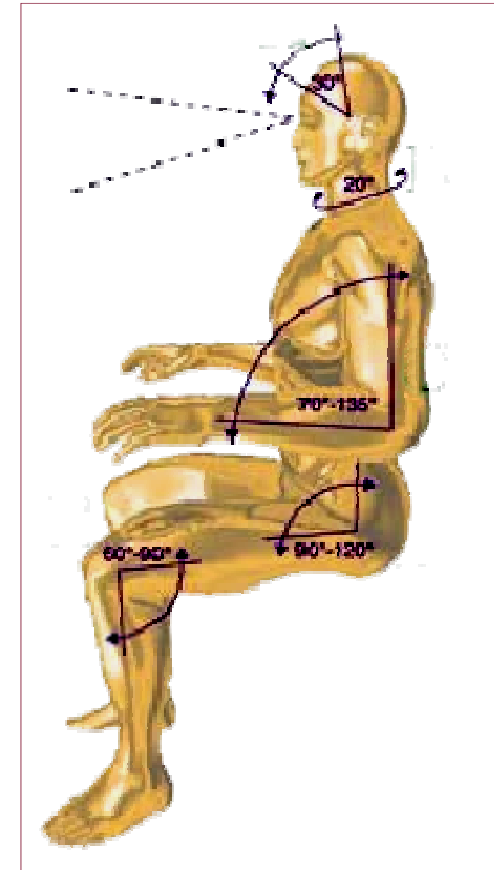


Image from 3M Office Ergonomics Self-Help Site ([www.3m.com/cws/selfhelp/guidelns.html](http://www.3m.com/cws/selfhelp/guidelns.html))