

Suggestions and Recommendations for Laptop Computer Users

Beepers...cell phones...voice mail...e-mail... laptop computers...

All of these devices help make our work day more productive. In addition to working at work, we can now work at home, in the car, on a plane, in a hotel room, or even while taking a walk. In essence, you can now carry your office with you -- wherever you go. However, this new found freedom can come with a price -- be it increased stress, lack of relaxation time, or poor body mechanics.

It is just as important to use these tools properly outside of the office as it is in the office. Laptop computers (also referred to as notebook computers) are being used more and more frequently, and present special ergonomic challenges. The following are guidelines and recommendations for incorporating good ergonomic principles when using laptop computers.

Guidelines for Notebook Computer Users While Traveling

If you plan to work in one place for an extended period, take these items with you:

- ✓ Mouse and mouse pad (or other external pointing device)
- ✓ Keyboard adapter
- ✓ 20 feet of telephone cord with appropriate plugs/adapters

When staying in hotels:

- ✓ Stay in hotels that have a business center where you can work
- ✓ Use pillows, phone books, blankets, etc. to help you achieve a comfortable working posture when working in rooms without appropriate furniture



- ✓ Use a mouse and mouse pad

When working on a plane:

- ✓ Sit in rows behind bulkheads or rows with emergency exits. Aisle seats are preferred
- ✓ Take frequent breaks; get up and walk around to relieve stress
- ✓ Blink often to reduce visual discomfort
- ✓ Try placing a pillow or magazine on your lap and put your computer on it
- ✓ Lower window covers to eliminate glare from sunlight

Guidelines for Notebook Computer Workstations in Offices

Workstations for notebook computers used without an external keyboard and pointing device

A workstation (table or computer desk) with a single horizontal work surface is recommended for supporting a notebook computer when used without an external keyboard and external pointing device such as a mouse.

- ✓ Workstations with a surface height adjustment feature (such that the user can easily raise or lower the work surface while seated or standing) are preferred. A height adjustment feature is recommended whenever a workstation is regularly used by more than one person. The range of adjustment must be sufficient for the user or users to achieve "ergonomically correct" postures using seating and accessories provide by the employer.
- ✓ A workstation with a work surface having a fixed height may be used if the height is suitable for the intended user. *Suitable height* in this context refers to any height within a limited range such that the user can achieve "ergonomically correct" postures using seating and accessories provided by the employer. An adjustable chair is recommended. Some users may need a footrest.



