

Back Pain in the Work Place - Office Furniture

- **Make your computer back-friendly**
- **If you use a laptop use a separate keyboard and mouse**
- **Take care with your chair**
- **Keep moving**

Make your computer back-friendly Sitting badly in front of a computer for hours on end is storing up trouble. The body can tolerate being in one position for only a short period of time before you feel the need to adjust. Positioning monitor, keyboard and mouse correctly can help to ensure good computer posture and the proper chair is essential. Repetition – performing the same movement over and over again – can also lead to muscle fatigue or injury, especially if your body is badly positioned. Here are some ways to keep your computer and back in harmony.

- **Look straight ahead.** Make sure your monitor is directly in front of you at arm's length. You shouldn't need to turn your head at all to see the screen properly. When you're working on a document, the top line of text should be just below eye level and you'll look down slightly to read the text in the middle of the screen. Don't forget that if you change the position of your chair, you need to adjust the monitor as well.
- **Keyboard in front.** Your keyboard should be directly in front of you. It sounds obvious, but it's not unusual to see people twisting around to use a keyboard that's off-centre. Your shoulders should be relaxed with your upper arms free at your sides. Turn your chair sideways to check that your elbow is level with the spacebar for the correct height.
- **Avoid 'mouse shoulder'.** Putting the mouse too high or too far away means that the upper arm is forced away from the body when you use it. This puts the shoulder in an awkward position and places strain on the muscles. If the position is held for a long period of time, the entire "mouse" side of the body is affected, from the neck to the upper back. Make sure you can use your mouse without stretching and with your elbow comfortably bent. Adjustable height keyboard/mouse trays allow the mouse to be placed conveniently beside the keyboard.
- **Using laptops** for long periods should be avoided without a separate keyboard, mouse and raised screen.

Take care with your chair

- By law office chairs (those used at workstations) must meet a certain minimum standard. They must be stable – the classic office chair with five legs in star shape. They must allow the user easy freedom of movement and a comfortable position – this means that the height must be adjustable and the seat back is adjustable in both height and tilt; ideally the seat back should move independently of the seat to allow for a more comfortable position.
- When you're seated, your thighs should be at right angles to your body or sloping slightly down. If your chair is properly adjusted your feet should be firmly on the floor, but if it's more comfortable, use a footrest. The basic rule is to plant your feet on the floor and support your back.

Keep moving

- Never forget that the human body is not designed to sit for long periods, even in the best posture. Don't lock yourself into a position for long stretches of time. Get up and move around. Shift your position often – at least every 45 minutes, every 20 minutes is even better - and stretch.

- Use telephone calls as an excuse to move – stand up to answer them. Set the timer on your computer to remind you to get up, stretch and change position

While BackCare does not recommend or endorse any of the following products, as it has no testing facilities by which to judge their effectiveness, the following BackCare Corporate Associates offer a range of products and services that you might find helpful. However you will need to exercise your own judgment as to whether a product will meet your requirements.

CORPORATE ASSOCIATES

The Back Store – Office Chairs and Desks

330 King Street, Hammersmith, London W6 0RR
Tel: 020 8741 5022 Website: www.thebackstore.co.uk

The Bambach Saddle Seat (Europe) Ltd - Office Seating

Unit 6, Prospect Business Park, Langston Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 3TQ
Tel: 020 8532 5100 Website: www.bambach.co.uk

The Comfort Shop – Office Chairs and Desks

17 Alexandria Drive, St Anne's-on-Sea, Lancashire FY8 1JF Tel: 01253 724902
Web site: www.the-comfort-shop.co.uk

Ergo-centric - Office Furniture, Chairs and Desks

Syamore Barn, Angram, York YO23 3PA
Tel: 0800 280 0656 Website: www.ergo-centric.co.uk

Fellowes Office furniture

Yorkshire Way, West Moor Park, Doncaster, DN3 3FB
T: 01302 836895 Website: <http://www.fellowes.co.uk>

Fineback Furniture – Office Chairs and Desks

7-9 Haseldine Road, London Colney, St Albans AL2 1RR
Tel: 01727 827744 Website : www.fineback.co.uk

GetBack Supplies Ltd - Office Chairs and Desks

GetBack Supplies, 583 Mansfield Road, Sherwood, Nottingham NG5 2JN
Telephone: 0800 243 469 Website: www.getbacksupplies.co.uk

Meditrex - posture control solutions for the home, office and car

18 Holroyd Road, Claygate, Esher, KT10 0LG Surrey
T: 01372 464859 F: 01372 473997 Website: www.meditrex.co.uk

The Office Backcare Centre - Office Chairs

24 Andover Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 2TJ
Tel: 01242 251779 Website: www.theofficebackcarecentre.co.uk

Oromed UK Ltd Website: <http://www.oromedhealthcare.com>

14 The Uplands, Gerrards Cross, SL9 7JG Buckinghamshire
T: 01753 891544 F: 01753 890140

Osmond Group Ltd – Office Furniture, Chairs and Desks

21 Johnson Road, Ferndown Industrial Estate, Wimborne BH21 7SE
Tel: 0845 345 0898 Website: www.ergonomics.co.uk

PostureMinder Ltd computer user posture checker

Guide Mills, South Street, Ashton under Lyne, OL7 0PJ Lancashire
T: 0161 214 2600 F: 0161 343 3497 Website: www.postureminder.co.uk

The Posture People – Office furniture, Chairs and Desks

The Posture People, 3 St Georges Road, Brighton BN2 1EB
Tel: 01273 685125 Website: www.posturepeople.co.uk

Posturite (UK) Ltd – Office Chairs and Desks

The Mill, Berwick, East Sussex BN26 6SX
Tel: 0845 345 0010 Website: www.posturite.co.uk

Probak Direct Limited – Office Seating

Unit 2, 20 Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham GL52 2LX
Tel: 0800 085 0900 Website: www.flexibak.net

Shape Posture Seating – Office Chairs and Desks

Rutland Mill, Off Coombs Road, Bakewell, Derbys DE45 1AQ
Tel: 01629 814656 Website: www.shape-seating.com

Sitsmart Ltd – Office Chairs and Seating

14 Decimus Park, Kingstanding Way, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 3EN
Tel: 01892 510202 Website: www.sitsmart.co.uk

The Wave Seat Company - Office Stool

Riverside Workshop, The Forge, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 4NX
Tel: 01768 773 612 Website : www.waveseat.com

RELEVANT INFORMATION

BackCare booklet – Back in the Office <http://www.backpain.org/ecommerce/cat-leaf.php#office>

BackCare factsheet – Exercises for Office Workers <http://www.backpain.org/pdfs/exercises-for-office-workers.pdf>
[shop.co.uk](http://www.backpain.org/pdfs/exercises-for-office-workers.pdf)

Useful Websites Campaign for Better Seating at www.betterseating.org

PostureMinder Ltd www.postureminder.co.uk

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