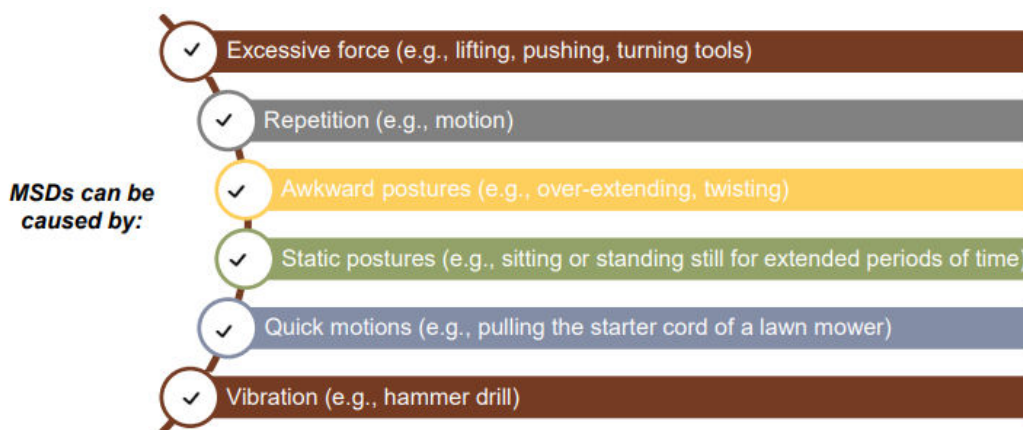


Workstation Ergonomics

If you are new to working from home, be sure to evaluate the comfort and safety of your workstation prior to beginning work. The information outlined below will help you to become familiar with the principles of ergonomics. Once you read through the text, spend some time setting up your home workstation properly to maximize comfort and minimize the risk of injury.

The Basics of Ergonomics

Ergonomics is an applied science concerned with designing and arranging work tasks to fit the worker, rather than physically forcing the workers' bodies to fit the task. In the workplace, ergonomics is considered and implemented to prevent musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) or the adverse effect to the muscles, nerves and tendons in the body. Parts of the body that can be affected by MSDs include the arms, back, hands, wrists, fingers, legs, neck, and shoulders. When ergonomics is considered, planning work tasks should be more efficient and safer.



It is important to detect and remedy discomfort or potential MSDs as soon as you become aware of them. As with most injuries, waiting for it to get “better” without taking some action may cause the problem to get worse. Ergonomic issues can usually be corrected quickly and with little expense.



Each job task should be evaluated for the conditions above to identify ergonomic deficiencies. You can employ the following actions to increase ergonomics efficiency and effectiveness in your workspace:

- Adjust computer workstations to height and reach of the individual; do not adjust the individual to fit the equipment.
- Adjust the height of working surfaces (e.g. work benches) to the person conducting the tasks.
- Take short breaks when planning on being in static positions for extended periods.
- Set up workspaces by placing supplies and equipment within easy reach.
- Minimize twisting the body or over extended reaching for objects.
- When lifting objects, use lifting/moving aids (e.g. carts or dollies), reduce the weight and size of items, keep travel distance less than 10 feet, minimize distance between load and body, and lift loads from knuckle height.

Key Things to Look Out For

Maintain good working posture:

- Whether you are working on the factory floor or in an office environment, the number one ergonomic priority is establishing a good working posture at your workstation. You should be able to sit or stand in a neutral body position with a relaxed posture that requires no stressful angles or excessive reaching to complete tasks.
- Check to see if the workstation or area is adjustable to fit to your body position (i.e. adjust height, move frequently used items closer to where you perform tasks).

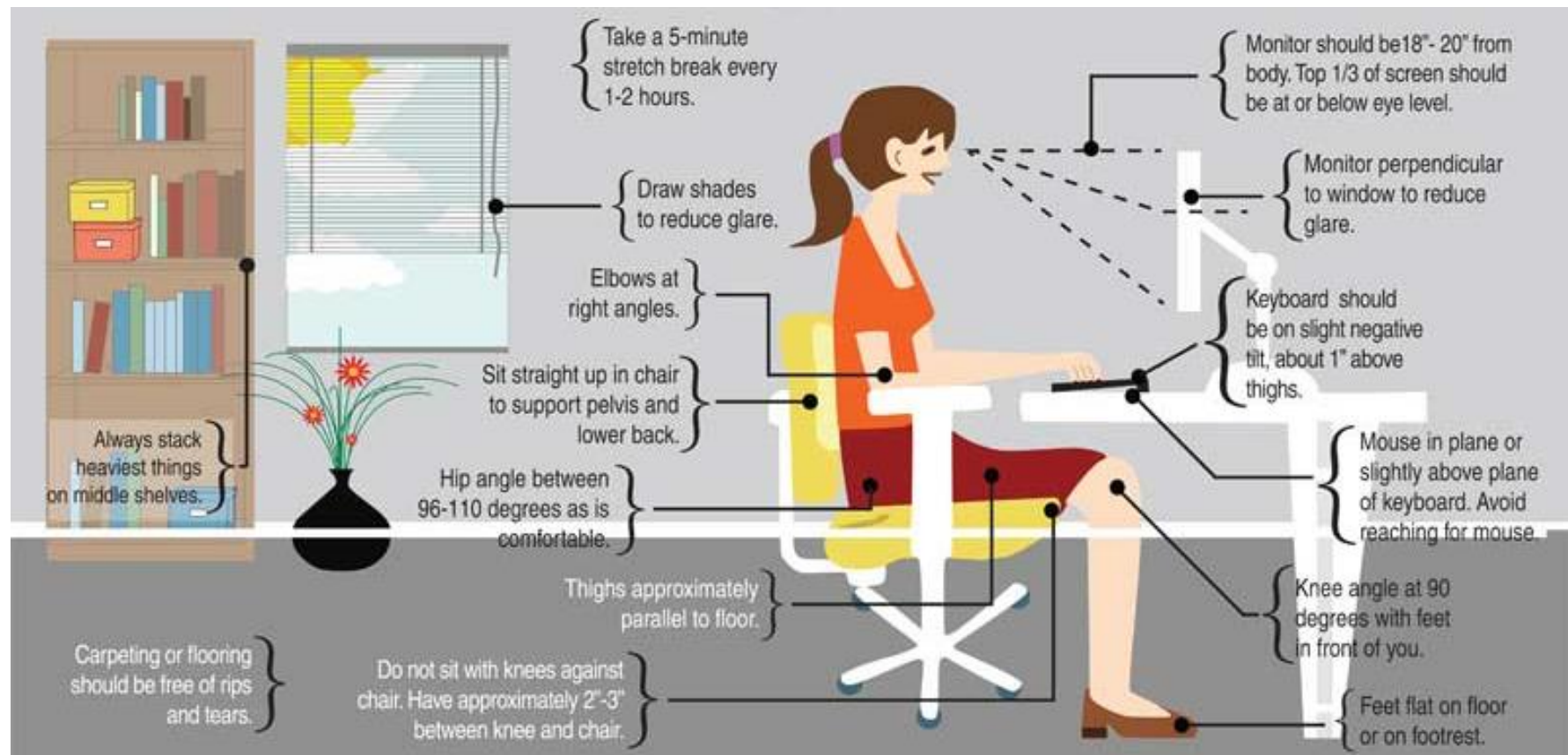
Reduce repetitive movement:

- In the workplace, most MSDs are caused by repetitive motion. Even if an individual applies perfect ergonomic principals, repeating the same motion over and over is going to cause stress and eventually lead to injury. The best way to combat this problem is by changing tasks. Doing something else and performing a different movement--even for a relatively short length of time--will reduce the potential for injury on the tissues under stress



Setting Up Your Workstation

Take a look at the infographic below and compare each of the elements to your workspace. Can you identify any adjustments that would improve the ergonomics of your space?



Content source: