

OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Annie Guillet, DC

Chiropractic and Ergonomics: A Winning Formula for Increasing Workplace Productivity

In today's high-tech world, many of us have jobs that involve sitting at desks and staring into computer screens all day. Did you know that this type of activity increases your risk of muscle and bone disorders (known as musculoskeletal disorders), including back pain, neck pain and carpal tunnel syndrome? Read on to learn how chiropractic care can prevent job-related injury — and improve your performance at work.



The Mind/Body Connection

Chiropractors are experts in the field of mind/body connection. They know that when your body is injured or forced to maintain a high-risk posture, it affects your ability to function at work and can undermine your desire to excel at your career.

Eliminating and preventing these musculoskeletal barriers responsible for keeping employees from working at top capacity — and being more effective and happy — is important to Dr. Guillet. So is providing patients with wellness strategies that can dramatically boost their productivity.

Prevent Techno-Stress With Chiropractic

“Techno-stress,” a recurrent byproduct of today’s workplace, frequently takes

its toll on the spine. You may be designing computer programs that revolutionize the world, but chances are you’re damaging your spine in the process. Sitting hunched over a keyboard all day can wreak havoc on your spine. In fact, a slumped forward posture can actually force your spine out of alignment, resulting in areas of restricted motion called vertebral subluxations.

Vertebral subluxations predispose you to a myriad of conditions such as neck and back pain and headaches. The good news? You don’t have to live with this condition. Dr. Guillet can evaluate your spine for vertebral subluxations and eliminate them before the onset of pain. Dr. Guillet can also restore proper alignment to your spine and teach you ergonomic techniques proven to prevent work-related injury. The following recommendations provide a sampling of these techniques.

Gimme a Break!

Chiropractors are enthusiastic proponents of on-the-job stretch breaks. Stretching elongates and relaxes weary muscles. In addition, stretching counteracts the destructive effects of a sedentary work posture. Taking “time out” also provides your eyes — and your mind — with needed



rest, averting visual strain and reducing emotional stress. What stretches are right for you? Your chiropractor can customize a stretch routine to best suit your unique needs.

Sitting Pretty

Your chiropractor can also work with you to ensure that your workspace’s layout isn’t increasing your risk of injury. For example, your chair can make the difference between living pain-free or developing spinal subluxations that provoke chronic backache. Here’s what to look for:



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- ✓ Choose an adjustable chair with adequate back support.
- ✓ Position your chair so that your thighs are angled horizontally and your feet rest flat on the floor.

Lower your chair so that your knees are angled at 90 degrees — if your feet still dangle at your chair's lowest setting, use a footrest.



Screen Savers

The position of your computer screen can also affect your risk of injury. What's the safest position for your screen? Here are some tips:

- ✓ Sit one arm's length from your screen (or approximately 20 to 24 inches).
- ✓ Adjust your terminal so that the top of the screen is at a 90-degree angle to eye level.
- ✓ Prevent eyestrain by minimizing screen glare. If glare is unavoidable, consider an antiglare filter.
- ✓ Adjust the contrast and the brightness of the terminal in accordance with the changes in environmental light.

Unlock the Key to Keyboards

Poor keyboard ergonomics can lead to chronic and debilitating conditions, such as carpal tunnel

syndrome. Reduce your risk of injury by adhering to these parameters:

- ✓ Release the tension in your shoulders and allow your arms to relax comfortably. If your chair is positioned at the correct height, this posture will occur naturally.
- ✓ Allow your forearms to hover horizontally over the rim of your desk — not at an upward angle.
- ✓ “Float” your hands slightly above the keyboard while typing, rather than resting your wrists on a desk or wrist pad.
- ✓ Use a wrist pad for rest periods between keying — not for support while typing
- ✓ Consider a split keyboard design if you are prone to hand or wrist injury. (Research is inconclusive on the benefits of split keyboards, so use the keyboard design most comfortable for you.)
- ✓ Keep your touch on the keys light and type with a gentle guide — avoid “punching” on the keys.



Escape the Mouse Trap

Mouse moves can aggravate shoulder and neck conditions because they provoke repetitive movements.

Rather than using a traditional mouse, consider switching to a “roll ball,” which eliminates forearm movement. In addition, never place the mouse on a level higher or lower than that of the keyboard. Instead, align the mouse as close as possible to the keyboard.



Be Proactive With Chiropractic

As prevention specialists, chiropractors are experts in injury-reducing techniques, such as office ergonomics. However, because the human body was not designed for sedentary deskwork, even the most ergonomic environment can boost your risk of injury. And, even slight “insignificant” discomforts can zap your energy, decrease your productivity and leave you dreading work.

Chiropractic care will help keep your spine in proper alignment to counteract the destructive effects of the modern workplace. So, don't wait until your work posture causes long-term problems. Be proactive. Visit a doctor of chiropractic today!

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