



## Reach: Keep it close

- Set up the workspace with frequently used equipment conveniently close to your body.
- Keep frequently used equipment within a forearms distance
- Long reaches to equipment can increase fatigue and discomfort.
- Avoid reaches outside shoulder width when using your mouse.
- When working away from the workstation, reaching down to floor level and lifting below knee height and above shoulder height can overload the back and shoulders.



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Centre of Research  
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Prevention of  
Musculoskeletal Disorders

**Work  
shouldn't  
hurt**

# Reach: Keep it close

- Frequently performed work should be performed closer to the body.
- The mouse and keyboard should be less than a forearm's length in front of the body.
- The keyboard and mouse should normally be at about elbow height and they should be used on a flat surface. The keyboard should not be tilted up. The goal is to have the forearms approximately horizontal, with the wrists straight and not bent back.
- If the number key-pad is not used heavily, a keyboard without a number key-pad allows the keyboard to be placed more centrally. This avoids workers having to reach for the mouse outside their shoulder width.
- If a worker uses a mouse with their right hand, they could consider using the mouse with their left hand where it could be positioned inside their shoulder width.
- Paper documents should be positioned close to the computer display to minimize awkward head positions. A document holder can be used to raise and hold the documents at screen height. A sloped document support allows for ease of viewing and handling.
- All the parts of the workstation have to work together: After adjusting the individual parts of the workstation separately, fine-tune the setup so the workstation fits your body and tasks.

- When working away from the workstation:
  - Lifting at the office: Reaching down to the floor and lifting objects below knee level puts high stresses on the spine. *Store it off the Floor*, reduces stress on the body.
  - Reaching and lifting with the hands above shoulder height can easily fatigue the shoulders. Keep commonly used items below shoulder height.

## INCLUDE BREAKS AND PAUSES AT WORK

- Move between different tasks to help reduce fatigue and discomfort.
- Perform other tasks like walking to a printer, filing, or water bottle filling as a short break away from the workstation.
- Fatigue creeps up on people. Vary tasks and working positions. Move early – before you feel fatigue – and move often.
- Stretching can help.

### IMPROVE WORK

- Ask yourself and others, “*Why do people feel fatigued or sore when doing office work?*” and keep asking “why” until you get a good answer!
- Once the underlying cause of the problem has been identified, employees and managers working together can control hazards and improve work best.
- Use these ideas for any office work, in an office building, home office, automobile or in the field.

### What are we going to do today to make our workstations and workspace better?

*Whatever changes you make, check that you are not creating any new problems.*

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