

## How to Stop Shoulder Pain at a Computer WorkStation

We have become a sitting society. And with sitting we have often adopted harmful postures. That we have succumb to poor posture is not a surprise to most, but what is a surprise is that poor sitting posture can adversely affect your shoulders.

Typical sitting posture at a laptop or computer. Head forward posture. Upper back rounded. Shoulders internally rotated. Shoulders forward. Low back rounded.



When you adopt this type of posture you are limiting the range of motion of your shoulders. Compare slumped sitting (move arms forward) and make note of the restricted range of motion of the shoulders.



Sit up as straight as possible, move the arm forward again, and compare it to the previous movement.



When the movement of the shoulder is impeded by poor posture, you are more likely to impinge the shoulder tendons. Repeated impingements can cause the tendon to gradually wear and break down. It eventually could result in a partial or full tear.

Adjusting in your workstation can make it easier for one to correct the common posture mistakes and reduce or eliminate stress on their shoulders.

Recommended adjustments.

These recommendations should be followed when work on a desktop computer, laptop computer, and even a tablet. In the case of the laptop and the tablet, we would strongly recommend purchasing a separate keyboard to use. Without a separate keyboard it will be virtually impossible for you to obtain good posture and reduce the stress on your shoulders.

Working on the computer has become a common source of back, neck, and shoulder pain)

Note the “C” posture of the girl in the photo. Many who work at the computer do so for hours on end without any breaks. The lack of breaks and the poor posture lead to shoulder overuse and pain.



### Recommendations for your Computer Work Station, Laptop, or Tablet:

Always adjust your workstation in the following order:

A. Chair

B. Keyboard

C. Mouse

D. Screen

E. Documents



A. Chair

Your feet should be firmly on the ground. If they do not reach the ground, you may need a footrest.



Use a chair with a firm and upright backrest. If necessary, use a back cushion to provide support to your lower back.

Avoid chairs with flexible backrests. The flexible backrest will usually encourage your back to settle into a “C” position.

B. Keyboard

Your upper arm should be vertical (straight up and down) and your forearm should be level (if you need to look at the keyboard quite often).

If able to type without looking at the keyboard, the keyboard may then be slightly sloped below level.



This allows your wrists to be as straight as possible.

#### C. Mouse

If you tend to use your mouse more than the keyboard, you may want to position the mouse in front of you, instead of off to the side. The placement of the mouse should be level with the keyboard.

#### D. Screen

Position the screen approximately 25-40 inches from your eyes. The further you can sit from the screen, the less fatiguing it is for your eyes. To find your ideal eye-to-screen distance, keep moving your screen further back until it is difficult to view. Then, slowly move the screen closer until it is the most comfortable distance from your eyes.

Most screens are placed too low. If your screen is too low, you are going to round your upper back and increase the stress on your shoulders. Use books or a stand to raise your screen up. The top of the screen should be at least a few inches above your eyes when your back, neck, and head are in good posture.



If you are using a laptop computer, it is essential for you to obtain a separate wireless keyboard.

If you wear bifocals or trifocals you should purchase a pair of reading glasses designed to be used with your computer screen. Set so you can comfortably view your screen 30-40 inches away. If you do not, you will be constantly putting your head forward and tipped back to see through your bifocals. It is impossible to obtain good posture in that position and it will indirectly place more stress on your shoulders.

#### E. Documents

Use a document holder to reduce help prevent you from looking down at your desk, rounding out your upper back, and placing increased stress on your shoulders. The document holder is generally best positioned directly below your screen, or to the side of it.

Remember to move. Get up every twenty minutes and do a few stretching exercises. Walk, whenever possible. While you are at the computer you can perform shoulder shrugs, neck extensions, and shoulder extensions.