



Recently I've been treating a lot of clients coming to see me with shoulder, neck and lower back pain. As we talk through their condition and the possible causes, there have been some very similar contributing factors to their conditions, being stagnant at work or doing repetitive duties. Whether they are office workers, truck drivers or mechanics, they all have repetitive issues and lack of movement.

Due to ongoing issues I've written this short article as a reminder of what we face and some things to think about at your work.

### **WorkStations. RSI. Ergonomics.**

**Workstation** is defined, traditionally, as a powerful computer dedicated to one person for a specific task. It can also be an area that is intended to be for a particular type of work to be performed. Most office workers now refer to their area as a workstation.

**RSI** is the medical term that refers to Repetitive Strain Injury, where an action is performed in the same manner repeatedly over a long period. This repetitive action can cause inflammation, weakness and pain in muscles, tendons, ligament or joints.

**Ergonomics.** This means to get the best and most efficient comfort and safety for your work environment to prevent injury soreness and possible chronic pain.

#### **What the link here?**

Many people are now in a job that requires a lot of repetitive duties, office workers typing on a computer, cooks standing behind a counter, drivers sitting all day, nurses bending and lifting patients, and the list goes on for many jobs. As we continue to do the same activities, and we must at times, we put a lot of stress on our body, which can lead to injury and chronic pain and injury. Many companies are aware of these issues and are putting plans into action to combat the chances of pain and injury through ergonomics in work places and rotation of duties. To reduce the chances of repetitive injury by sitting in front of a computer it is recommended that you vary positions often and vary between sitting and standing.

Many places are now starting to switch to a sit-to-standing work-station and it is important to make sure of correct positioning for the person using that station, and to make adjustments to the work-station for each individual user.

Remember that a standing workstation is similar to a seated one; the positioning should follow the same guidelines.

- Your posture is facing forward.
- The desktop is at elbow height or just below it.

- The positioning of the keyboard should be in front of the user and the forearms are supported by the desk while typing. The mouse should be close to the keyboard and on the same level
- When typing or using the mouse your arms should be at your side.
- The top of your monitor should be at eye level or slightly below.
- The positioning of your screen should be at the right height so you do not tilt your head forward or back or do not twist your neck.
- The height of the monitor should be comfortable to look at when standing without tilting your head. It should also be approximately an arm's length away. All the while keeping correct posture.

Remember to keep changing between sitting and standing. Any repetitive duties should only be done for a short period before changing position or alternating tasks.

You should always listen to your body, if you are experiencing any discomfort or pain change position and see your health care provider for advice.

Be aware of your footwear as this can affect your posture; try to keep comfortable shoes for use at the workstation, even anti-fatigue mats can help.

All joints need to be in a comfortable position and feeling relaxed. Try to keep all your work close to your body.

Remember to keep your body well hydrated, especially in the colder months, when the air is dry, or if you work in an air-conditioned environment.

Get a regular massage to help the body cope with the demands of repetitive tasks. Massage also helps to loosen the muscles and joints so you can perform better and recover quicker from fatigue or injury. Massage can also help with mental stimulation in an office environment so you may think clearer and perform better, resulting in better satisfaction with your job.