LAPTOPS

Laptops provide a convenient, portable platform for users, but are not ergonomically-ideal for long-term use unless properly set up. The joined keyboard and monitor compromise relaxed, neutral postures and often result in positions that increase musculoskeletal stress.

**Laptop Setup**

- To avoid the “turtle” posture (hunched back, protruding neck/head), make the laptop like a desktop:
  - Use an office chair;
  - Use separate input devices to allow the shoulders to relax and the hands to be at elbow level; and
  - Place laptop on a riser (or use a separate monitor) to allow the screen top to be at/slightly below eye level.
- Avoid using the laptop on your lap for extended periods of time.
- Do not lie down when using the laptop - seated/standing postures are recommended.
- To avoid glare, position the laptop screen perpendicular to windows; close shades and blinds to avoid bright outside light; and avoid working under bright sources of light.

**Work Practices**

- Interrupt continuous laptop use by taking microbreaks (at least every 30 min for 1-2 min) and alternating tasks.
- Maintain neutral wrists while typing.
- Reduce contact stress by floating the hands above the keyboard.

**Handling**

- When choosing a laptop bag, consider the weight of laptop, power cord, external devices, folders, etc.
  - Rolling carrying cases are recommended for loads over 10 lbs.
  - Laptop backpacks should have wide, padded shoulder straps and a waist belt to distribute some of the load to the hips.

Complete the web-based computer workstation ergonomics training (EHS 3400 – available through STARS) to learn about proper ergonomic setup and work practices.
MOBILE PHONES/TABLETS

Mobile phone and tablet technology, like desktop computer and laptops, can pose musculoskeletal stress if ergonomic practices are not kept.

SMARTPHONES AND TABLETS SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR EXTENDED COMPUTER WORK - USE A DESKTOP/LAPTOP COMPUTER AND ENSURE A PROPER ERGONOMIC SETUP.

Phone Use
- Use hands free devices to eliminate awkward, static postures - especially during long phone calls.
- Limit duration and frequency of calls, texts, and emails.
- Maintain neutral wrist posture and alternate hands when holding devices.
- Reduce keystrokes with text shortcuts (search “text shortcuts” on your web browser or app store), or where feasible, use speech-recognition applications.
- GENERAL SAFETY REMINDER: Avoid distracted mobile phone use when walking, driving, or biking.

Tablet Use
- For extensive text entry, use a separate keyboard and prop the tablet on a stand to improve the viewing angle.
- Limit duration of tablet use - take frequent microbreaks.
- Focus on neck posture - avoid excessive looking down when reading emails or texts.
  - For prolonged reading while seated, prop the tablet on a backpack, pillow, etc. to bring the screen closer.
- Alternate hands and fingers when using buttons/touchscreens.
- Reduce keystrokes with text shortcuts (search “text shortcuts” on your web browser or app store), or where feasible, use speech-recognition applications.
  - Search application stores for products that reduce keyboard use.
- Maintain neutral wrist posture and alternate hands when holding devices. For tablets, consider cases with hand straps to reduce gripping.