

# DoD Ergonomics Working Group NEWS



Issue 16 updated, January 2003

<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/>

## *ERGO FAQ*

### **Should I choose an “in-the-desk” computer monitor?**



The decision to use an in-the-desk (also known as below-desk) computer monitor is a matter of personal preference. However, we recommend that you first test the use of this unique style of computer furnishing prior to making a purchase.

There are a number of issues to consider in making your purchasing decision:

- With an in-the-desk monitor, you are more likely to sit awkwardly in your chair, leaning forward to view the screen, hunching over in a turtle-like posture. This can result in physical discomfort.
- The low placement of the computer screen can increase the chance of glare. However, this can be a simple set-up fix—just be sure your workstation is placed to avoid problems with glare from either natural or artificial lighting.
- If you wear bifocals or trifocals, you may benefit from having your computer screen at a lower height and, therefore, may prefer an in-the-desk monitor.
- Although the recommended computer screen viewing angle is 10-20 degrees down (so you gaze only slightly down to view the center of your screen), an in-the-desk monitor requires you to gaze down between 45-60 degrees. As a result, you may experience neck pain or discomfort.
- Keep in mind that when your computer monitor is fitted in your desk, it is taking up a large portion of your desk's potential work area and you may regret this loss of work space. On the positive side, if the monitor is adjustable and can be “hidden” in the desk, the entire desk's work surface can be made available for use.
- With your monitor in your desk as opposed to on top of it, you increase the likelihood of the screen becoming dusty or dirty with fingerprints so you must be attentive to keeping the screen clean.