

DoD Ergonomics Working Group NEWS



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The Cost of Proper Office Ergonomics: Making Adjustments at Fleet Readiness Center East

Fleet Readiness Center (FRC) East in Cherry Point, North Carolina, made an investment in their workers and workstations, eliminating the nightmare office environment illustrated below. On the following pages, the FRC East comptroller addresses the funding of their ergonomic revitalization and photographs are provided of some of their successful solutions.



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Revitalizing Your Office Area with Adjustable Workstations

by Joseph Kasperski, FRC East Comptroller

The challenge of moving an office out of the ergonomic stone age into the 21st century can often carry a significant price tag. However, you cannot allow this to be a deterrent. The most important aspect is to have an assessment of your area—determine what is needed. The typical bare essential list should include an ergonomic chair, keyboard, mouse, and flat panel screen.

Moving off the ground floor, you will soon understand that foot rests, lighting, phone headsets, elevated workstations, padded standing areas, etc., also play a key role. I know this sounds daunting, and is a list that would not survive most budget reviews, but there are alternative strategies.

From an individual department level, you will most likely have to work the "list" in reverse priority using unexpended labor funding that is typically experienced from vacancies during your execution year. Realigning your labor budget to your nonlabor budget allows you to purchase the smaller items such as keyboards, mice, phone headsets, etc. These relatively small items will have a large benefit on the ergonomic grading scale and typically get you in the passing zone.

The same strategy must be adopted from a command perspective for installing modular workstations (typically \$4,000-\$5,000 per station) and ergonomically adjustable chairs (\$500-\$850 per chair). Essentially, using unexpended funding from labor or other areas to revitalize a department's office area requires a long-term execution strategy for "overhauling" the entire command on a 5-10 year schedule. Leadership commitment is a must and involves understanding that putting a worker in an unsafe position is unacceptable whether that injury occurs in microseconds or over the span of a career.



Sonya Baker, Systems Accountant: "I feel much better being able to alternately stand and sit throughout the day. The relief on my back makes an unbelievable difference."



Mrs. Clarissa Francis, approximately 6' tall, is demonstrating how her desk is raised to the optimal height while her feet are propped up. Mrs. Francis shares a stationary, half-moon end table with Mrs. Claudia Morgan, who is not as tall and prefers to keep her workstation at a lower level. Both women use flat screen monitors that can be angled to reduce eye strain, chairs with adjustable arm rests and lumbar supports, and anti-fatigue floor mats that allow for periodic standing to eliminate lower back and neck pain. This ergonomic revitalization has made the office a more comfortable and inviting place to work. These improvements pay for themselves over time by improving wellness and productivity.



For additional information, or if you have questions, contact the FRC East ergonomist, Rich Borcicky, at richard.borcicky@navy.mil.