

It's a fact...

Your computer workstation should include a desk that's right for you.

Your connection to your work is through your hands. Place equipment on and around your desk so that when you perform routine tasks:

- ◆ Your shoulders are relaxed.
- ◆ Your upper arms are close to your body.
- ◆ The angle between your upper arm and forearm is in the range of 75° to 135° .
- ◆ Your wrists are bent no more than 5° right or left and no more than 10° up and down.



Adjustable Desk

Ideally, your desk should have an adjustable surface large enough to accommodate a monitor and a separate, adjustable keyboard tray. Adjustable desktops and keyboard trays allow for different operators and a variety of tasks to be performed.

Fixed-Height Desk

- ◆ A fixed-height desk can make using the computer uncomfortable. A desk that is too low causes the spine to curve. A desk that is too high causes the arms to be held away from the body and the shoulder and neck muscles to be raised or bent forward.
- ◆ If a fixed-height desk is used, add a keyboard tray that adjusts vertically to provide added adjustability. The minimum adjustment range for this tray should be 22" to 28" (56 to 71 cm) from the floor.
- ◆ Adjust your chair to a comfortable position. Adjust the keyboard tray to allow you to type with the angle between your upper arm and forearm in the range of 75° to 135° , and your wrists bent no more than 5° right or left and no more than 10° up and down. Then adjust the monitor support surface to allow you to gaze slightly down to view the center of the screen.

Desk Design

- ◆ Select a desk that is stable.
- ◆ Desktops should have a matte finish to minimize glare and reflection.
- ◆ Avoid sharp edges—rounded or sloping edges are preferable.
- ◆ Avoid glass tops—sharp edges compress the arm during writing tasks. Also, glass tops present a glare problem.
- ◆ From your desk's edge, the minimum under-desk clearance depth should be 15" (38 cm) (optimally, 17" (43 cm)) for your knees and 23½" (60 cm) for your feet. The minimum under-desk clearance width should be 20" (51 cm).
- ◆ The desktop should be large enough for work objects (at least 27½" (70 cm) wide), and should prevent the sliding of these objects.
- ◆ The desk surface should be deep enough to provide at least 16" (41 cm) between your eyes and the monitor screen. If necessary, move the desk away from the wall to provide enough space between your eyes and the monitor screen.
- ◆ Obstructions under your desk should be removed to provide sufficient leg room.
- ◆ Taller workers or workers with a history of back pain may be more comfortable with a height-adjustable desk, a sit/stand desk, or a standing workstation. The minimum adjustment range for a keyboard tray on a standing workstation should be 34½" to 47¼" (88 to 120 cm) from the floor.
- ◆ If your desk is too low, raise your desk by placing stable wood or concrete blocks under the desk legs or use a desk leg stand. If your desk is too thick for you to place your legs under the desk, remove a middle drawer or add a keyboard tray.



This fact sheet is a product of the DoD Ergonomics Working Group and was adapted from their June 2000 publication, *Creating the Ideal Computer Workstation: A Step-by-Step Guide*.

Written for both supervisors and workers, the fact sheet provides basic information on ergonomics. For more information, visit the working group's Web site at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/ergowg/product.htm>.

Desk Evaluation Checklist

If you answer **NO** to any of the following questions, you have a potential problem.

Yes **No**

- 1. Is your desk stable?
 - 2. Does your desktop have a matte finish?
 - 3. Is your desk surface adjustable?
 - 4. If your desk has a fixed height, is the keyboard tray adjustable with a range of 22” to 28” (56 to 71 cm) from the floor?
 - 5. Is your desk surface large enough to accommodate a computer and a separate adjustable keyboard?
 - 6. Is your desk surface large enough to accommodate work objects and prevent those work objects from sliding?
 - 7. Is your desk surface deep enough to provide 16” (41 cm) between your eyes and the screen?
 - 8. Have you removed all obstructions from under your desk?
 - 9. For your knees, is your under desk clearance a minimum of 15” (38 cm) from your desk’s edge?
 - 10. For your feet, is your under desk clearance a minimum of 23½” (60 cm) from your desk’s edge?
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