

Laptop Ergonomics



Why do I ache when I use my Laptop?

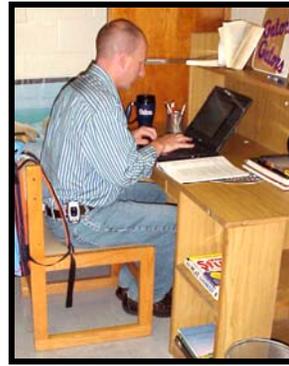
Laptops were created with mobility in mind. Many of the design features that make them good for mobile computing create problems when it comes to ergonomics.

"The reason is simple - with a fixed design, if the keyboard is in an optimal position for the user, the screen isn't and if the screen is optimal the keyboard isn't. Consequently, ..."

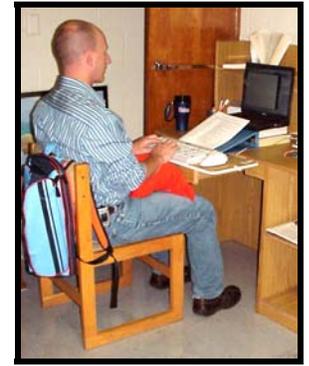
- Cornell University Ergonomics

Ergonomic Checklist for Laptop Users

Laptop Features	Possible Consequences	Risk Factors
-Small Size Keys	Increased errors resulting in increases in keying	Increased duration
-Smaller Keyboard	Constrained Hand and finger positioning-increased errors	Awkward static work for muscles and hand-increased duration
-Forward position of key pad	-increases resting of palms when typing/mousing or overreaching	Bent wrists, increased pressure on base of palm (carpal Tunnel), increased tension in shoulders/upper back
-Small pointing device (mouse)	Use of fewer and smaller muscles in one finger	-increased static muscle tension causing fatigue in muscles of hand and finger
-Screen attached to keyboard	Difficult to position for ideal viewing and keying set-up	Eye strain, Awkward upper body while leaning towards screen
-Weight of laptop	Extra weight	Shoulder/neck strain



Needs Improvement



Better Ergonomics

Maintaining neutral postures will reduce stress and strain to the musculoskeletal system.

- ✓ Use a full size keyboard and tracking device whenever possible.
- ✓ Prop laptop up so top of screen is level with eyes.
- ✓ Incorporate mini-breaks every 20 to 30 minutes.
- ✓ Maintain about an arm's length viewing distance.
- ✓ Keep your ears, shoulders, and hips in alignment.
- ✓ Position the keyboard at elbow height, and keep your wrists straight while keying.
- ✓ Remember: When seated your hips should be slightly higher than your knees.
- ✓ If you are seated in a side chair or couch, use a pillow to support your arms while keying.
- ✓ Clean the screen regularly using appropriate antistatic cleaning materials.
- ✓ The hands and wrists should be kept in a straight wrist posture when typing and should not be resting on a palm rest, table, or lap while typing.

Remember This Key Posture Check: Maintaining Ears, Shoulders, and Hips in alignment will help to maintain a neutral computing posture!

Information adapted from "Ergonomic Fact Sheet" by Sue Pettit, Ergonomist with OHS Division, NS Department of Environment and Labor, PO Box 697, Halifax, NS B3J 2T8

For more information, contact
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