

The ERGOnian

A monthly newsletter for the Oregon State Agency office ergonomic community

July 2006

Tips for Using a Laptop Computer

Laptops - As technology continues to grow, data entry and laptop usage continues to be in demand. The design of the laptop computer is geared towards mobility. Unfortunately, this design typically violates basic ergonomic principles. It is important to ensure that the laptop user can comfortably type on a keyboard that may only be 75% the size of a regular keyboard. The smaller keyboards encourage additional ergonomic challenges including ulnar and radial wrist deviations while the fixed monitor tends to encourage bad postures. With most laptop designs, 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. Therefore, it is recommended that laptop users pay special attention to how they use a laptop since the design is unlikely to be changed.

Laptop User Type – There are basically two types of laptop users: the **occasional user** whose usage is short and sporadic and the **full-time user** who uses it as their main computer. Both types of users should pay attention to how they use their laptop, but full-time users may have a higher potential for injury.

Recommendations for the Occasional User

- Find a chair that is comfortable with good support.
- Position your laptop on a desk (where elbows are not bent more than a 90 degree angle) or on your lap for the most neutral wrist posture that you can achieve.
- Angle the laptop screen so that you can view it with the least amount of neck deviation.

Recommendations for the Full-time User

- Position the laptop on your desk/work surface in front of you so that you can see the screen without bending your neck (where elbows are not bent more than a 90 degree angle). This may require that you elevate the laptop using a stable support surface, such as a computer monitor pedestal.
- Use a separate keyboard and mouse. You should be able to connect a keyboard and mouse directly to the back of the laptop or to a docking station.
- Use the keyboard on a negative-tilt keyboard tray to ensure a neutral wrist posture.
- Use the mouse on an adjustable position mouse platform.
- Follow the basic office ergonomic rules for workstation set-up.

Next SAIF Ergo Assessor Training Date

August 15, 2006
8:30 AM to 11:30 AM
@ SAIF Corporation

To register online:

<http://www.saif.com/Policyholders/phtrain.htm#StateAgency>

Laptop Monitors

Consider issues of screen size and screen resolution when choosing a laptop. Many laptops offer large screens (15" plus) however, the larger the screen the more difficult it will be to use in mobile locations (e.g. car, airplane, train).

A small screen (e.g. 12.1") will be useful in mobile settings, but if the resolution is high (e.g. XGA - 1024 x 768) make sure that you can read the screen characters and can easily use the input device to point to areas on the screen.

Resource Center

<http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/SSD/Risk/Training.shtml>

<http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/SSD/Risk/ergoguide.shtml>

<http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/osha/pdf/pubs/1863.pdf>

<http://www.ergonomics-information.com/>

Ergo Assessor Graduates

Congratulations to the following employees that completed their **3** required ergonomic assessments, and have officially graduated!

DAS – Linda Morrell; **DCBS** – Laura Trevizo;

DHS – Cathy Baker, Denise Derrick, Andrea Allison, Sandy Gee;

DOC – Alice Corrigan;

Student Assistance Commission – Peggy Cooksey