

At the office

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Basic Requirements for a more comfortable day in the office:

A day in the office can leave you tense and stressed. However there is no reason it should leave you with back pain. Spending a little amount of time making sure that your chair and workspace are set up properly will help avoid unnecessary pain and discomfort.

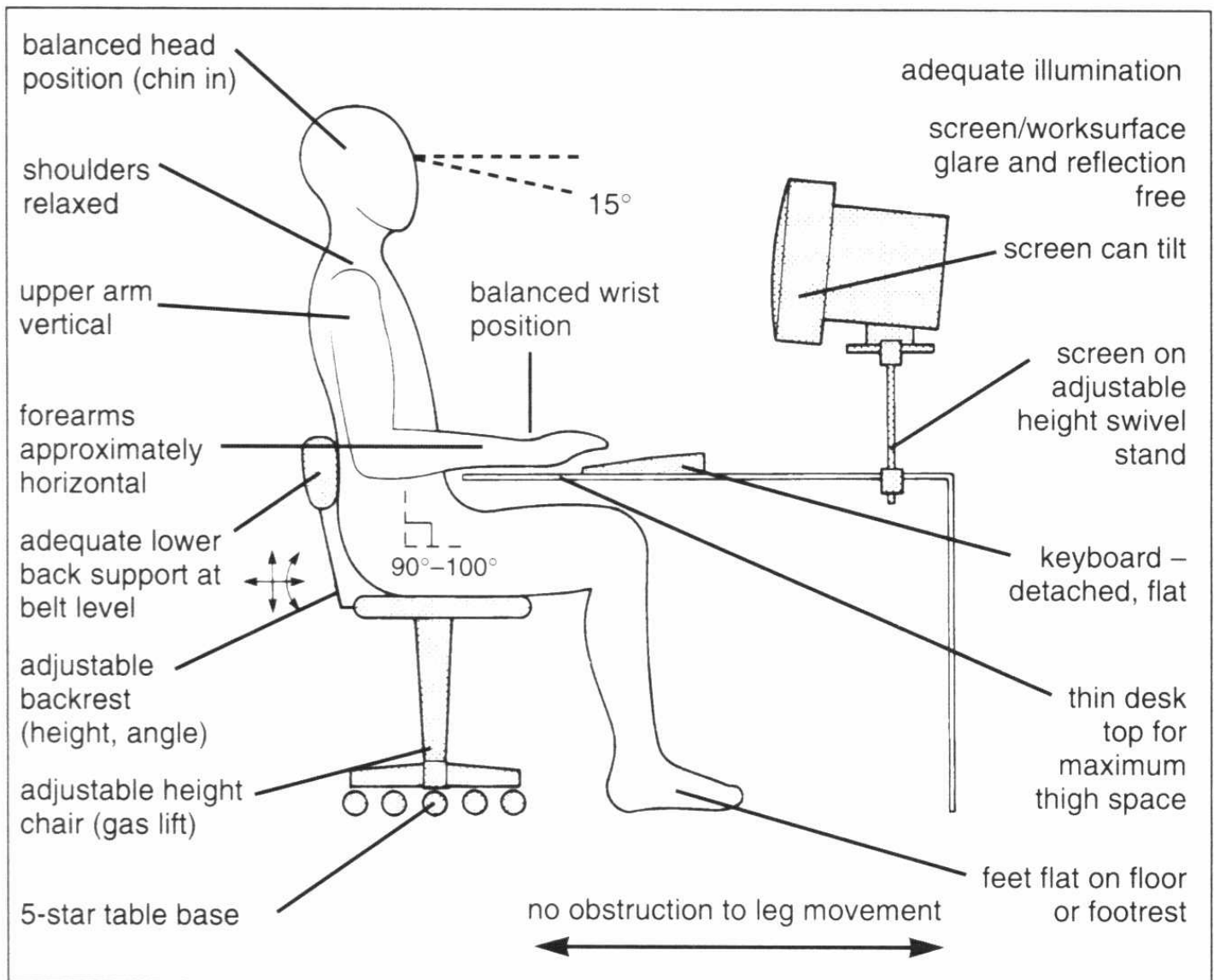
Do make sure that you take a break every now and again! Getting up as often as possible will stretch the spine, improve circulation and help you concentrate on restoring good posture when you sit down again. These small breaks are also good times to perform some simple wrist and shoulder exercises, which you can find in our advice sheet **“Wrist and shoulder exercises”**.

The office chair

1. Is your seat height adjustable? Adjust the seat height to fit in with what you are doing, be it paperwork or computing.
2. Are your feet firmly on the floor? If not you need to use a foot rest. This is especially important for people with lower back problems since unsupported feet can cause more stress on your spine.
3. Are your thighs supported? If there is pressure behind the knees when using the back rest, your seat may be too deep or may not have a waterfall edge.
4. Is there enough space for your thighs under the desk? There should be adequate space to find a comfortable position.
5. Is the tilt adjustable? Tilting the seat slightly forwards can be more comfortable and can promote a better posture, but beware of too much of a tilt: you don't want to feel as if you are being tipped out onto the floor!
6. Is the backrest adjustable? Backrests should be adjustable in both height and tilt. They should support the small of your back. Long backrests will support your upper back and shoulders too, but you may find this restrictive.
7. Is your chair stable? Five star bases are recommended. Castors are useful for mobility, but are unsafe on high seats or uncarpeted floors.
8. The seat padding should be comfortable. Check that it does not cause pressure at any points, e.g. at the back of your thighs.
9. Armrests may be useful for some people but if you can't adjust their height they can prevent you from getting the chair under the desk.

Download more free advice sheets at www.cityclinic.co.uk/advisesheets/

The desk top and computer



1. Is there enough desk surface to allow flexible arrangement of equipment? Your desk should be 80–100cm from front to back.
2. Is your keyboard positioned correctly? It should be detached and tiltable, so that it is possible to find a position that will avoid hand or arm fatigue.
3. Are your forearms horizontal when you are typing or writing? Your arms should be at a height where your upper arm can relax, with your elbows at a right angle when you are typing.
4. Is there enough space to relax your hands and arms? There should be enough workspace in front of the keyboard to rest your hands and arms. This should be around 6–8cm.
5. Is your computer screen straight in front of you, with the top of the screen level with your forehead? This means that you have to look slightly down on to the screen, which is the best posture for extended periods of computer work.
6. Is the computer screen adjustable? It should be tiltable and on a swivel stand: take time to adjust the computer screen to suit your good seating posture, rather than adjusting your posture to the screen.
7. Do you have an easy-to-see display? The screen should be flicker, glare and reflection free. To avoid reflections on the screen, it should be at right-angles to the windows or main lighting.
8. Do you need a copy holder or a stand? A well-positioned copy holder will minimise the need for uncomfortable head and eye movements.