

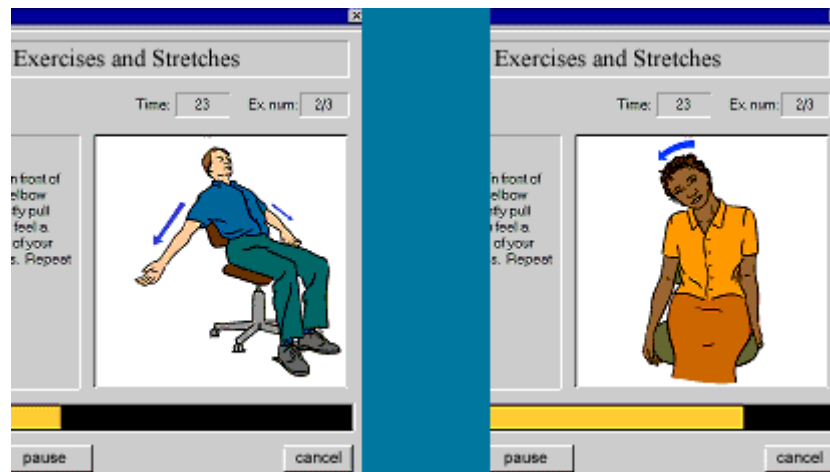
Preventing Computer Related Injuries



Work break software

The key to reducing the risks associated with computer use is to pace your work - maintaining an even work rate, taking regular breaks before fatigue occurs, and doing stretches and exercises to rejuvenate your muscles. Both short and long breaks refresh mind and body and are proven to reduce fatigue and enhance productivity.

Software packages such as [WorkPace](#) will monitor your mouse and keyboard use and prompt you to take short breaks when they are most needed. It provides break, stretch and exercise reminders and visual guides (below), ergonomic training, monitoring of discomfort levels, and statistics on individual computer usage.



Furniture

When setting up your workspace, you will also need to consider your furniture including seating, desking, lighting, telecoms, computer hardware, software and accessories. Some of these can be customised such as chair seat height, angle, adjustability as well as desk dimensions including depth and width. However tempting and practical it may seem to set yourself up initially at the kitchen table, do bear in mind that sitting in an awkward position and 'making do' for the time being may put your body under stress and out of action in the longer term.

Accessories

There are a number of accessories, which help to change the way you hold your body and limbs in relation to your computer and your workstation. The mouse, for example, is generally recognised as one of the most significant contributors to the RSI health hazard, a situation that is deteriorating as software development continues to increase mouse usage. Considerable effort is therefore being devoted to designing safer pointing devices which better position the arm, hand and fingers, thus reducing muscle tension and repetitive movement and increasing comfort and relaxation.

Another example of how accessories can improve your posture almost sub-consciously is the laptop holder. Gradually more and more desktop computers are being replaced by laptops. However practical this may be, from an ergonomic point of view it is not desirable for extended periods of use. Due to the low positioning of the laptop screen and the fixed keyboard, most laptop users maintain a hunched body posture while working. Intensive use can therefore cause serious musculo-skeletal pain and injuries, particularly for users on the move. As a result much time has been focussed on the development of the laptop holder, which can position your keyboard and screen just right for health, and comfort.

Article written by Home Working Solutions Ltd
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