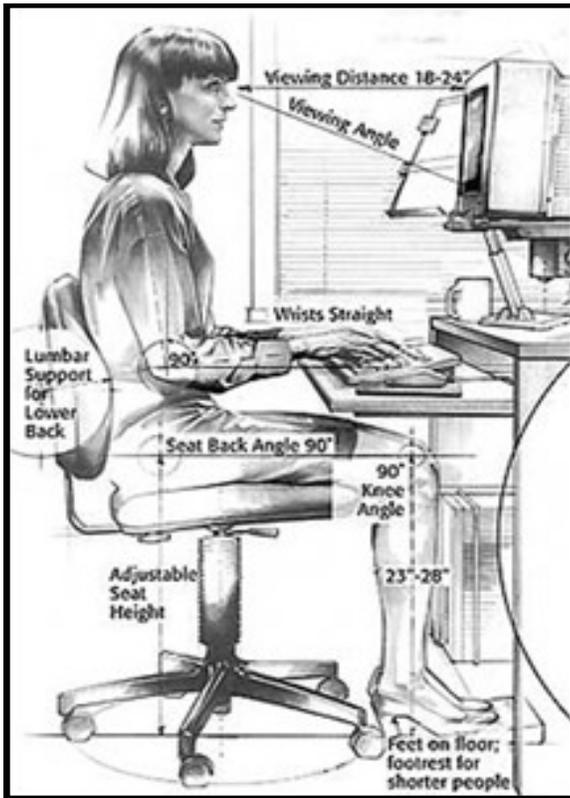




Ergonomics

What is Ergonomics and Why is it Important?

Ergonomics, or “human factors”, is the science of designing equipment, the workplace, and even the job to fit the worker. It covers a broad spectrum of factors that make up the fit between humans and work. Ergonomic research enables designers to create equipment better suited to the human form so that it puts less stress on the body, as well as controlling external factors such as light, temperature, and noise so workers can be at their most productive for longer. Poor design leads to stress which leads to Work Related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WMSDs).



The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has identified that WMSDs are the single largest job-related injury and illness found in the USA. These disorders can affect the body’s muscles, joints, tendons, ligaments, and nerves. Most WMSDs develop over time and are caused either by the work itself or by the employee’s working environment.

One type of WMSD is carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS). Last year (2010), UW had several CTS work related compensation claims. Several of these employees underwent surgery to correct the problem. CTS is a condition caused by the compression of the median nerve as it passes through the wrist into the hand and is characterized especially by weakness, pain, and disturbances of sensation in the hand and fingers. Pinching or compression of the median nerve, sets into motion a progressively crippling disorder that eventually results in wrist pain, numbness and tingling in the hands. If you start to experience these symptoms, contact the RM&S Office at 766-3237 for an ergonomic evaluation of your workstation.

Other CTS symptoms include sleep interruption from numb hands and tingling fingers, pain radiating up the forearm, cold hands, loss of feeling sensation in fingers & thumb. People loose their hand grip strength, drop objects, and have increase achiness in the shoulders and neck.

In an effort to reduce employee injury and discomfort, the University has recognized the benefits of having an ergonomic program. This program takes a basic, systematic approach and offers common-sense strategies in eliminating unnecessary musculoskeletal disorders from the workplace. Implementing sound ergonomic principles in the design of new/old work areas reduces cost associated with injuries, absenteeism, errors, and maximizes productivity. Many studies have shown that the program is cost effective... ALWAYS!

To Learn More about the Benefits of Ergonomic Design:

<http://www.uwyo.edu/risk/safety/occupational/ergonomics.html>

Sign up for online training at: <http://www.uwyo.edu/risk/safety/training/index.html>