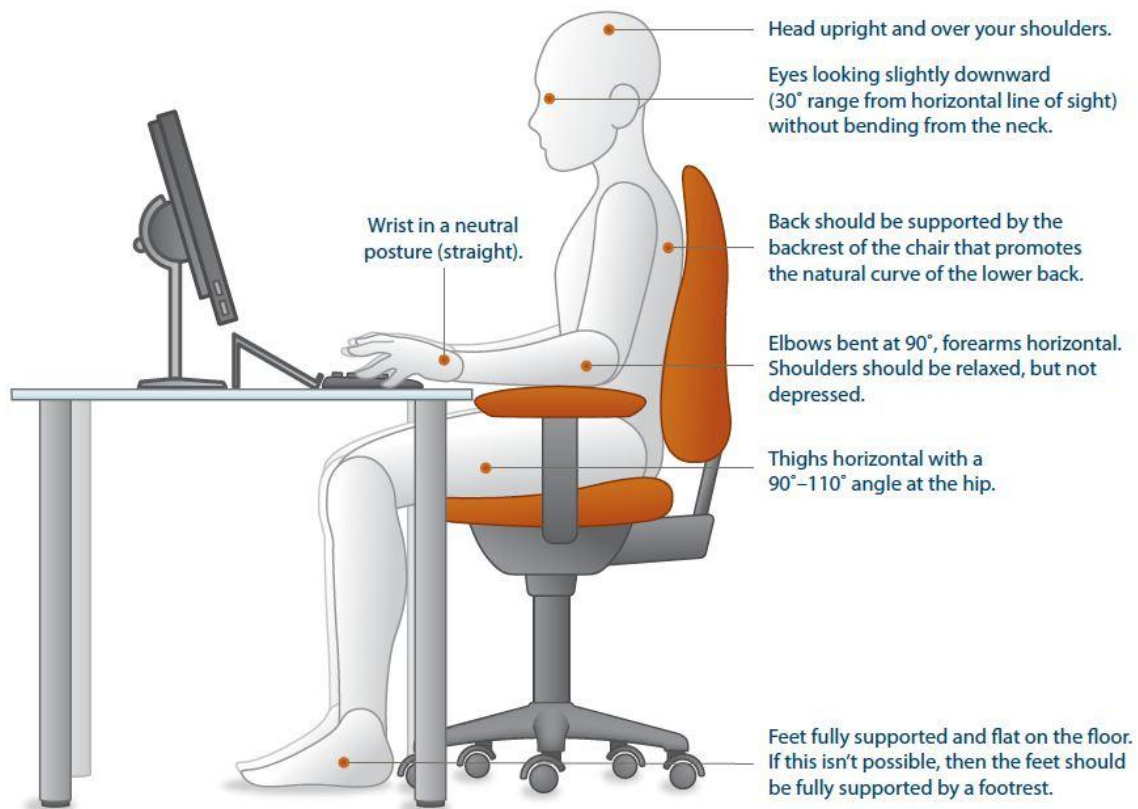# Office Ergonomics

To identify poor posture, you need to be able to answer: "what is good posture?" When using a computer, we may start with correct posture, but quickly resort to slouching and reaching. At your computer workstation, ideal posture can be described as:

Head upright and over your shoulders.

Eyes looking slightly downward (30° range from horizontal line of sight) without bending from the neck.

Wrist in a neutral posture (straight).

Back should be supported by the backrest of the chair that promotes the natural curve of the lower back.

Elbows bent at 90°, forearms horizontal. Shoulders should be relaxed, but not depressed.

Thighs horizontal with a 90°–110° angle at the hip.

Feet fully supported and flat on the floor. If this isn't possible, then the feet should be fully supported by a footrest.

This image depicts ideal sitting posture, however, it should be noted that no posture is ideal indefinitely. You must change your posture and position frequently by adjusting the setting on the chair and alternating tasks (typing, writing, walking and standing) as often as possible. This will ensure proper blood flow and reduce the risk of injury.

Adjusting the chair

Adjust the height and tilt of the seat so that the feet are resting on the ground and the thighs are parallel to the floor. If the furniture is fixed and too high, adjust the chair height to adopt the posture described. Add a foot rest if the feet are not supported on the ground. Adjust the backrest slightly to the rear. The lower back should be well supported.

Images from http://www.worksafenb.ca/docs/officeedist.pdf

Office Ergonomics

Adjusting work surfaces and supports

Furniture with adjustable keyboard tray

Adjust the height of the arm rests so that the shoulders are relaxed, the arms close to the body and forearms resting on armrests. If they are not adjustable or are bulky, it is best to remove them. Adjust the height of the keyboard support for the keyboard to be slightly below the elbows. The angle between the arm and the forearm should be about 90 o to 135 o.

Uniform work surface furniture

Lower the armrest (or remove); the chair should slide easily under the desk. Then close as possible to the office of the trunk and push the keyboard and mouse in front of you to keep them away from the table edge. In this arrangement, it is best to use a very thin keyboard and flat. Adjust chair height so that your shoulders are relaxed, the arms close to the body and forearms resting on the work surface.

Screen Adjustment

Use fixed or removable media and properly adjust the height and distance from the screen. Place the screen in front of you, adjust to it at a distance equal to about the length of an arm. The top of the screen should be at eye level. The head should be straight. Adjust the angle of the screen to optimize visual comfort. The user who wears progressive lenses should possibly adjust the screen below.

Setting the keyboard and mouse

Place the mouse close to the keyboard and make sure the hand is a straight line with the forearm. Use a thin, flat keyboard or reduce the keyboard angle by lowering its hind legs and, if necessary, add a wrist rest.

If you need a hand to adjust your workstation, ask your OSH committee to get the help of a coach in ergonomics. This one is specially trained to advise you and help you adjust your equipment to get a good posture.
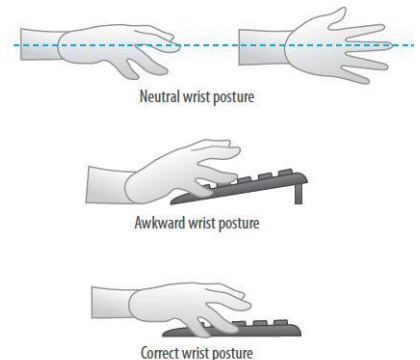
For more information

Program and policies, Section 5.2, Occupational Health, Safety and Disabilities, Parks Canada's intranet:
http://intranet2/tools/health-and-safety/ohs_prog_sst/section_v/?lang=en

Office ergonomics, Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety:
http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/ergonomics/office/index.html

Images from http://www.worksafenb.ca/docs/officeedist.pdf