

POEL9C Desk layout



Ensuring that your desk is correctly set up will help to avoid various long-term occupational issues, such as repetitive strain injury and carpal tunnel syndrome.

Screens

Reflections and glare can be irritating and uncomfortable on the eye, but can also affect posture as you bend or twist your neck to 'see around' the reflection. Wherever possible, your screen should be placed at right angles to windows to avoid direct reflection or background glare i.e. not facing or backing onto a window.

As a rule of thumb, the top of the screen should be about eye level; however, you may need to adjust this if you are a non-touch typist, or you wear bifocal or vari-focal spectacles.

Do you have any obstructions i.e. bins or boxes that restrict your movement? Are all cables secured safely? Confirm there are no cables draped loosely under the desk. Confirm there are no cables unprotected on the floor.

Using a mouse

Intensive use of a mouse, trackball or similar pointing device may give rise to aches and pains in the fingers, hands, wrists, arms or shoulders. This can also happen with a keyboard. Most mouse work concentrates on activity on just one hand and arm (and just one or two fingers) and this intensity may make problems more likely to occur.

Risks can be reduced by adopting a good posture and techniques, i.e.

- Place the mouse close to you, so that it can be used with a relaxed arm and straight wrist without over-stretching, and adjust the position of your keyboard to ensure you have support during pauses between keying.
- Support your arm on the desk or armrests of the chair. Do not over-reach.
- Don't leave your hand on the device when it is not being used.
- Take frequent breaks and short pauses.
- Use good keyboard techniques: wrists straight, a soft touch on the keys and do not overstretch your fingers.

If you have tremors in your hand or finger problems, a **stationary mouse** is the best option. However, if you are still finding the mouse awkward, there are alternative shapes and sizes, or even an alternative device such as a **trackball mouse**.



A **roller mouse** is good for neck and shoulder issues.



A **vertical mouse** is more effective generally than a mouse mat and keyboard rest (as users tend to swivel their wrists). If possible, trial one before purchasing.



The **Microsoft Arc** and **cordless Trackman optical** are types of mouse that allows the hand and wrist to work in a more natural position:

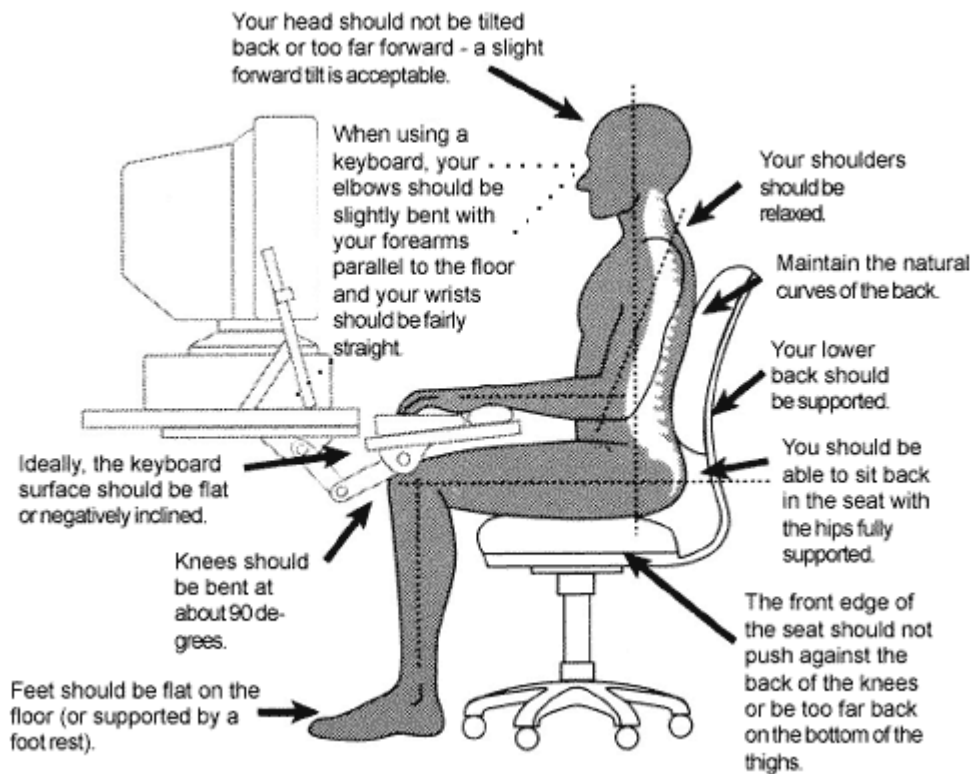


A **mouse bean** provides good wrist support, and is very useful if the user has carpal tunnel syndrome:



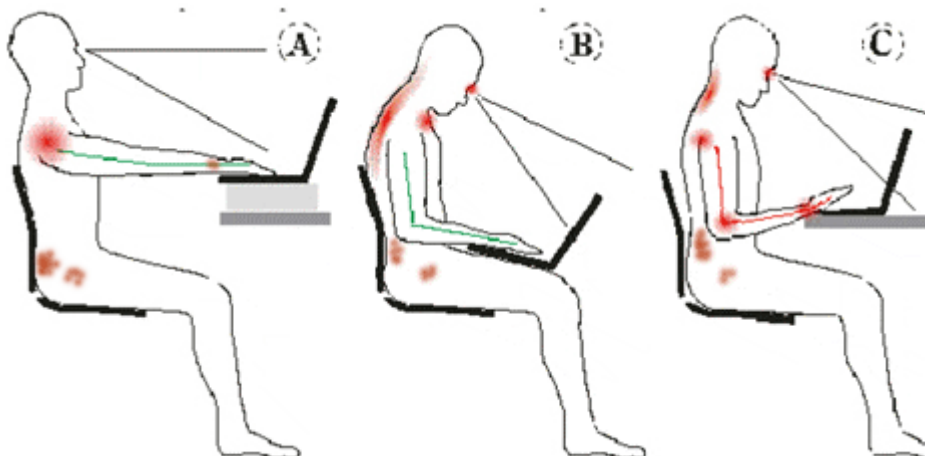
Good seating and posture for typical office tasks

1. Seat back independently adjustable for height and for tilt, and chair arms dropped
2. Good lumbar support
3. Seat height adjustability
4. No excess pressure on underside of thighs and backs of knees
5. Foot support if needed
6. Space for postural change, no obstacles under desk
7. Forearms approximately horizontal – elbows at 90 degrees, shoulders relaxed
8. Minimal extension, flexion or deviation of wrists
9. Screen height and angle should allow comfortable head position
10. Space in front of keyboard to support hands/wrists during pauses in keying

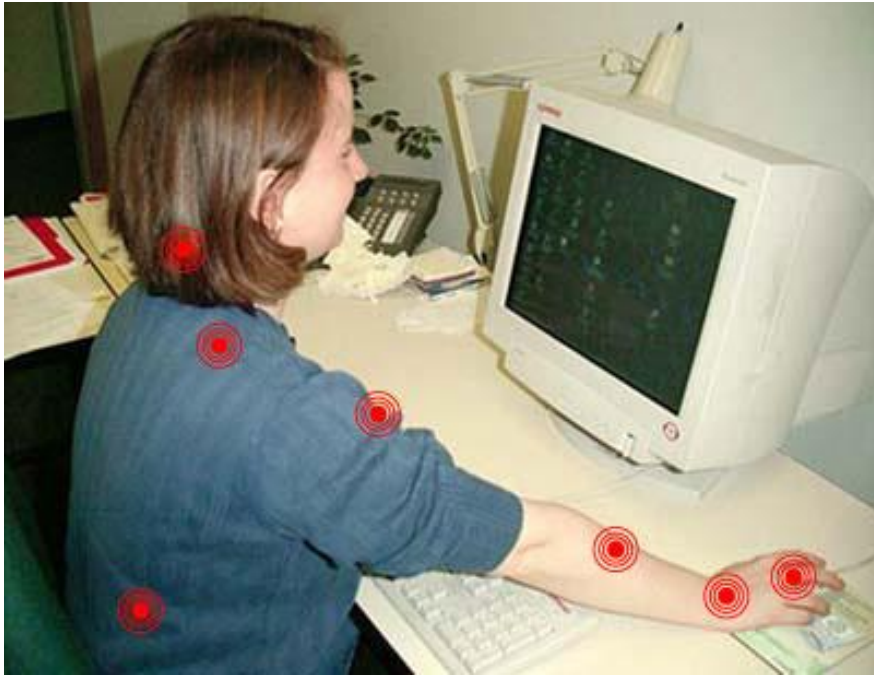


Bad seating and posture

By contrast, the following positions may contribute to long-term physical conditions, e.g. repetitive strain injury, carpal tunnel syndrome, as indicated by the red zones.



Example of incorrect mouse position (i.e. arm too straight)



Keyboard

Is your keyboard separate from the screen and does your keyboard have a matt surface, legible symbols, an appropriate layout and sufficient space in front of it?

Do you experience aches or pains in your hands, wrists and arms whilst using your keyboard?

Tips

- Try pushing the display screen further back to create more room for the keyboard.
- If you have a raised, thick keyboard, a wrist rest may help.
- When typing, **aim to avoid**:
 - bending your hands at the wrist
 - hitting the keys too hard
 - over-stretching your fingers

Good keyboard technique is critical. When typing, your forearms should be parallel with the desktop and roughly level with the top of the keyboard. There should also be room to rest the hands when not typing.

There are an increasing number of **ergonomic keyboards** on the market, and also **left-handed keyboards**.



You may need to consider a **document holder and/or writing slope** combined, e.g. a Multirite.



Additional resources - links

[G30 Agile Working Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Active Working - for height adjustable desks \(PDF, 215K\)](#)

[Active Working - for height adjustable platforms - VARIDESK \(PDF, 184K\)](#)

[DSE helpful hints \(PDF, 613K\)](#)

[Workstation exercises \(PDF, 510K\)](#)