Video Display Terminal Tips

The following tips are designed as a guide in order for you to make corrections within your workstation. Ultimately this should result in your job becoming easier, safer and less fatiguing.

For Your Eyes and Head

- Know your equipment and know your software. Microsoft Word uses a 10 pt font default. Consider changing font size when starting a new document and format later. The larger size font will make viewing easier especially for those of us getting older and requiring corrective lenses.
- Static body postures are fatiguing and simple stretching exercises are a good way of getting blood flowing through static muscles.
- Know how to change your desktop settings: color, contrast, etc.
- Take frequent breaks. As you stare at your screen your eyes will become dry. Blink! Blink! Blink! Dryness will irritate eyes especially for those wearing contacts.
- Focus on a far-away object periodically each hour for a brief period of time.
- Keep glare to a minimum. Glare can be minimized by screen position. Locate the monitor perpendicular to windows to avoid glare. Another key to minimize glare is to locate your monitor parallel and between rows of lights. Glare screens work but there usually is a trade off – fuzziness etc. (see attached tables).
- Know your eyes. As we age so do our eyes. Consider fixed focal length glasses vs. bifocals for working on the computer.
- Try and keep documents and screen at same height and distance. If this is not possible, try to keep the document and screen in line with each other. Use manual or document holders when able to.
- Avoid shiny work surfaces.
- Keep your screen clean.
- Computer use typically requires less light than when working with hard copies

For Your Head, Neck and Shoulders

- Ask yourself, what does most of my work entail? For high frequency tasks consider the following:
- Data entry-screen off to the side and the document straight ahead. Studies how the worker spends 70-80% looking at the source document, 15-20% at the display, and 3% on keyboard.
- Data inquiry tasks often require no source document. Keyboard and screen straight ahead.
- Dialogue tasks should have the screen in front and document between you and the screen or both slightly off to each the side. Studies how the worker spends 35% looking at the source document, 30-40% at the display, and 20-35% at the keyboard.
- Top of display at eye level line of sight will be 10-15 degrees below.
- Screen center above Floor 90-115cm (31.5” to 41”).
- Keyboard middle row to table edge 10-26 cm (4” to 10.25”).
- Preferred keyboard angle 7 to 11 degrees. 5-15 is alright. The key is to have the wrists straight.
- Average display to worker distance should be 18 to 21”. But viewing ranges of 13 to 30” are not uncommon. You decide what’s best, but make the adjustment if needed.
- Raise or lower the desk as needed.
- Reduce keying via letter merges, templates, etc. Mousing vs. keying. Establish user groups to learn or become more effective users of the tools provided.

Our safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are made solely to assist your organization in reducing hazards and the potential of hazards and accidents. These recommendations were developed from conditions observed and information provided at the time of our visit. They do not attempt to identify every possible loss potential, hazard or risk, nor do they guarantee that workplace accidents will be prevented. These safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are not a substitute for ongoing, well-researched internal safety and risk management programs. This report does not warrant that the property inspected and its operations are compliant with any law, rule or regulation.

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• Desk height vs. ideal keyboard height. Desks are 29-30 inches, keyboard height should be 27-31”. Fixed table height for both keyboard and screen is 27”.
• Take advantage of cubicle offices to adjust workstation to meet the workers’ needs rather than the standard desk height.

For Your Hands Arm and Wrist
• Discomfort occurs in the neck shoulder arm and hand when:
  - Keyboard is too low or too high;
  - Forearms and wrists cannot rest on adequate support;
  - When you have a marked head inclination; and/or
  - Ulnar deviation (little finger side).

Some tips to reduce discomfort for your hands, arms, and wrists are as follows:
• Adjustable arms for chairs.
• Avoid straight keying of copy for more than two hours.
• Use filing, data analysis, other projects, test breaks, exercise, cross training, and educational time outs to minimize routine keying.
• Avoid single task operations such as straight transcribing
• Eliminate sharp edges on tables and desks. Pressure points. Round or pad.
• If extensive mousing is required, alternate mousing with the right and left hands to give the right hand a rest.

For Your Feet Legs And Back
• Provide a footrest.
• Raise or lower the chair or work surface as needed to allow feet to rest on floor or footrest.
• Avoid under desk clutter i.e. CPU’s, boxes of forms, etc.
• Keep hips and knees bent to approximately a 90 degree angle.

Miscellaneous
• Don’t take out the day’s frustrations on the stapler. It never did anything to you. Get a bigger stapler! Automate if necessary consider electric if a lot of stapling is required. Same for hole punches.
• Photocopy using collating and staple features.
• Pry style over pinch style staple removers. Avoid the pinch grip and force.
• Large diameter pens vs. small. Cushion vs. hard. Avoid the pinch grip and force.
• Photocopy over multiple copy carbons.
• Storage of supplies. On a shelf not under desk. Heavy items between knuckle to shoulder height.
• Keep copy paper at optimum work height (between knuckle and chest height).
• Know your short cuts. Mousing vs. keying, right button mousing etc.
• Use your on line exercise software.
• Provide headsets or speakerphones if telephone use is integral to the position. Especially if long periods of time are encountered while on hold. At a minimum provide a phone cradle.

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• Design reach tasks to the 5th percentile female and clearance tasks to the 95th percentile male.

• VDT screen level with the eyes. Line of sight at to 15 degrees below line of sight.

• Document holders should be at the same height.

• VDT placement will depend on amount of VDT viewing; i.e. significant hard copy work.

• Should have document placement in front of operator and VDT off to the side.

• VDT angle for the seated worker should not exceed 40 degrees.

• Average VDT viewing distance is 18 – 23 inches. 13 – 31 inches is not uncommon.

• Increased seat angle results in reduced disc pressure and muscle strain.

• Keying heights should be 20 – 31 inches, depending on the workstation and keyboard type.

• 26 inches under work surface to allow for leg clearance.

• The angle between the upper and lower arms should be 70 – 135 degrees.

• Feet should rest flat on the floor supporting the weight of the legs.
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