Are you sitting comfortably? - pointers for a healthy reporting room

As reporters spend a significant amount of time working with a Visual Display Unit (VDU) they are protected by The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

Employers have a duty to:
- analyse workstations, and assess and reduce risks
- ensure workstations meet minimum requirements
- plan work so there are breaks or changes of activity
- on request arrange eye tests, and provide spectacles if special ones are needed
- provide health and safety training and information.

You are entitled to a work place assessment to ensure your working conditions are adequate to your need – speak to your manager for this.

EVALUATE YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Five steps to orientate yourself before starting to report
1. Ensure feet are flat on the ground with legs uncrossed
2. Forearms should be approximately horizontal to desk
3. Adjust seat height and back support
4. Adjust lighting - recommended less than 15 lux (equivalent of a very dark day)
5. Adjust height and tilt of the monitors to a comfortable position for you:
   - User’s eyes should be the same height as the top of the screen
   - Screen luminance ratio ≥500:1
   - 20:20:20 principle - focus the eyes 20 feet away from the workstation for 20 seconds every 20 minutes to reduce visual symptoms

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Adjustable chairs
- Height adjustable desks
- Risk awareness
- Frequent stretches
- Rest breaks
- Use of headsets/mouse re-programming
- Use backlit keyboards
- Regular eye testing
- Regular exercise out with work

REPORTING ROOM STRETCHES

1. Neck rotation
2. Head turns
3. Shoulder roll
4. Scapular protraction
5. Shoulder shrugs
6. Forward bend
7. Lower back stretch
8. Hip flexor stretch
9. Hip external rotation
10. Knee hyperextension
11. Ankle plantar flexion
12. Finger stretches

DID YOU KNOW...

People with sedentary occupations have double the rate of cardiovascular disease than those with standing jobs.

After 2 hours
- Good cholesterol drops by 20%
- Insulin function drops 24%
- Diabetes risk rises
- Immediate effects of sitting
  - Leg muscle electrical activity shuts off
  - Eventually you burn calories at 1 per minute
  - Enzymes to break down fat drop by 90%

After 24 hours
- Insulin function drops 24%
- Diabetes risk rises

POTENTIAL EFFECT ON YOUR HEALTH

Neck problems
- Hunching over the desk/keyboard, holding a recording microphone may add up to 60lbs of weight to the spine causing spinal and disc degeneration plus nerve damage, headaches and compromised shoulder function.

Low Back Pain
- Non specific LBP can result from excessive sitting.

Hip function
- Long periods of sitting can cause tissue shortening and hip impingement reducing functional ability.

Knee problems
- Shortened calves and tight quadriceps from prolonged sitting can generate mechanical knee pain.

Iliotibial band syndrome
- Prolonged sitting or standing can contribute to the development of ITBS.

Hernias
- Sitting for long periods encourages abdominal wall muscles to function poorly making hernias more likely.

Eye problems
- Prolonged use of VDU’s increases the risk of developing eye strain. Symptoms may include: pain, sensation of grittiness and a reduction in contrast sensitivity.

Scottish Clinical Imaging Network