

YOURHEALTH

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Duradiamond
Building Healthy Business



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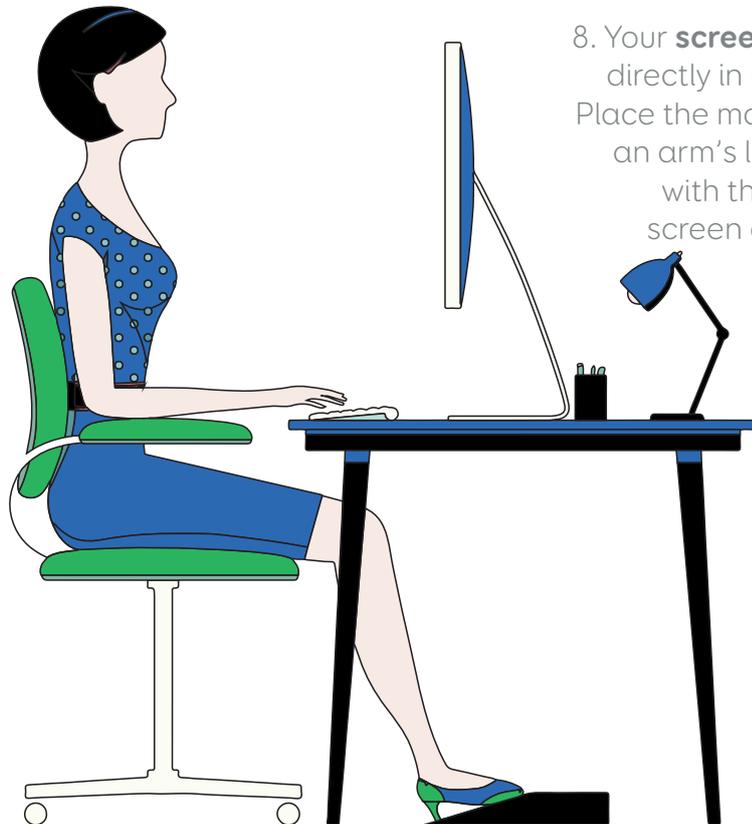
SORE BACK? THAT COULD BE AN MSD!

MSDs cover any injury, damage or disorder of the joints or other tissues in the upper/lower limbs or the back. They can be caused through work, mainly via incorrectly-positioned display screen equipment (DSE) and incorrect manual handling. Your employer or OH provider will help you to avoid these injuries if they are work-related, by assessing your role and providing training and advice to avoid MSDs.

HOW DO I SIT CORRECTLY?

If your work involves sitting a lot and using a computer, here are some useful tips to help you sit correctly.

1. Get an **easily adjustable chair** so you can change the height, back position & tilt. Your knees should be slightly lower than your hips. Use a footrest, if necessary.
2. Adjust your **chair height** so you can use the keyboard with your wrists & forearms straight & level with the floor.
3. Place your **keyboard** in front of you when typing. Leave a gap of about 4-6in at the front of the desk to rest your wrists between typing. Keep your arms bent in an L-shape & your elbows by your sides.
4. Position/use your **mouse** as close to you as possible. A mouse mat with a wrist pad may help keep your wrist straight & avoid awkward bending. If you're not using your keyboard, push it to one side to move the mouse closer to you.
5. Change your **posture** as often as you can. Frequent short breaks are better for your back than fewer long ones.
6. Place your **feet** flat on the floor. If they're not, ask for a footrest. Avoid crossing your legs.
7. People with **bifocal glasses** may find them difficult for computer work. It's important to be able to see the screen easily without having to raise or lower your head. If you can't work comfortably with bifocals, you may need a different type of glasses. Consult your optician if in doubt.
8. Your **screen** should be directly in front of you. Place the monitor about an arm's length away with the top of the screen at eye level. You may need a monitor stand.
9. Your **screen** should be as glare-free as possible. Position it to avoid reflection from overhead lighting/sunlight. If necessary, pull blinds across the windows. Adjusting the screen's brightness/contrast can help.
10. Position **frequently used objects**, e.g. telephone/stapler, within easy reach. Avoid repeatedly stretching or twisting to reach things.
11. If you spend a lot of time on the **phone**, try exchanging your handset for a headset instead.



HOW TO RELIEVE BACK PAIN

Lots of us experience back pain and it usually improves within a short time. Pain in the lower back is particularly common, although it can be felt anywhere along the spine, from the neck down to the hips. In most cases, the pain isn't caused by anything serious and will usually get better over time.

How to relieve back pain:

- Stay as active as possible and try to continue your daily activities; resting for long periods is likely to make the pain worse
- Try exercises and stretches for back pain; other activities such as walking, swimming

or yoga may also be helpful

- Take anti-inflammatory painkillers, such as ibuprofen. Do check the medicine is safe for you to take first and ask a pharmacist if you're not sure
- Use hot or cold compression packs for short-term relief, available from your local pharmacy, or a hot water bottle or a bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a cloth will work just as well
- It also helps if you stay optimistic and recognise that your pain should get better, as people who manage to stay positive despite their pain tend to recover quicker.

WHERE CAN I GET HELP AND ADVICE?

Back pain usually gets better on its own within a short time. You may not need to see a doctor/ other healthcare professional.

However, it's a good idea to get help if the pain doesn't start to improve within this period or it stops you doing your day-to-day activities.

Also, if the pain is very severe, gets worse over time, you're worried about the pain or are struggling to cope, it's worth seeking help and advice.

Your GP will ask about your symptoms, examine your back and discuss possible treatments. They may refer you to a specialist doctor or a physiotherapist for further help.

Seek **IMMEDIATE** help if you have

- Numbness or tingling around your genitals or buttocks
- Difficulty peeing
- Have loss of bladder or bowel control
- Chest pain
- A high temperature (fever) of 38c (100.4f) or above
- Unexplained weight loss
- A swelling or a deformity in your back
- It doesn't improve after resting or is worse at night
- It started after a serious accident, such as after a car accident.

REDUCING THE RISK OF BACK PAIN

- Do regular back exercises and stretches - your GP/physiotherapist can advise you about exercises to try
- Stay active - doing regular exercise can help keep your back strong; adults are advised to do 150 minutes of exercise a week
- Avoid sitting for too long when driving or at work
- Take care when lifting - read some safe lifting tips, e.g. NHS Choices
- Check your posture when sitting, using computers and watching television

- Ensure the mattress on your bed supports you properly
- Lose weight through a healthy diet and regular exercise if you're overweight - being overweight can increase your risk of developing back pain.



Sources: NHS, DHC physiotherapists