Back In Line Chiropractic

Cheap, possible (and some obvious!) solutions to getting a better computer set-up

- **Monitoring your screen** The top of the monitor should be at eye level. If it is too low, use large books (e.g., old phone books) to raise the monitor. You can also purchase fairly inexpensive stackable "risers". If the monitor is too high, take off any removable stands or feet from the monitor. The monitor should be between 15 and 25 inches from your head. Sometimes the monitor is too close and the wall prevents you from moving it back any further. Try moving your desk a few inches from the wall to give you room to slide the monitor back. Or maybe you are close to the monitor because that is where you put your keyboard. One solution it to use your desk's top drawer as a keyboard tray. You might have to put stuff in the drawer to give your keyboard an even surface. Try using magazines or books.

- **Got to wear shades!** Reflection or glare can fatigue your eyes and give you a huge headache. If the light source is a window, try moving your monitor so that the screen is not facing any windows. If you have curtains or vertical blinds experiment with different positions to minimize glare. You can also make a hood or shade for your monitor out of cardboard. Find the position for the cardboard that eliminates the most glare and tape it to your monitor. (Make sure NOT to cover any of your monitor's ventilation slats or holes.)

- **Can a wrist rest?** Maybe you rest your wrists on a hard edge when you use the keyboard or mouse; or they just plain hurt. The best thing to do is learn how to not rest your wrists while you type. Resting your wrists when you aren't typing (or mousing) is fine. Try folding or rolling up an old hand towel and placing it at the foot to your keyboard or mouse pad where you rest your wrists. Instead of a towel, you can try bubble wrap used in packaging. It can help to tape down the towel or bubble wrap so it won't unfold or slip. You can also purchase fairly inexpensive wrist wrests make of neoprene or rubber.

- **Can't see what you're typing?** If you are trying to type from a document lying on your desk it can strain your neck and eyes. One solution is to prop up a clipboard against a book edge. Tape the bottom of the clipboard to your desk and then adjust its angle by moving the book behind it. You can also purchase fairly inexpensive "copy holders" to put on your desk or attach to your monitor. No matter where you put your document, just make sure that it is easy to view without straining your eyes.

- **Sitting on pins and needles?** The contours of your chair should support your lower and upper back. Your feet should rest flat on the floor. If your chair is too low you can try a piece of foam, towel, or a pillow tied or taped to your chair seat. The same solution can work if your chair back is uncomfortable or the chair seat is too long. Put a pillow or some kind of "filler" behind your back. (Sometimes it just takes a partially used paper towel roll.) You can also purchase fairly inexpensive "chair pillows" to attach to your chair back.

- **Desk too high or low?** Once your chair is adjusted properly, it is a good idea to have your desk just above elbow height. If your desk is too tall, a drastic, yet helpful solution is to shorten the legs (own a chainsaw?). If you don't own your desk or cutting is not possible, but your feet aren't touching the ground, find some sort of footrest. This can be anything from a sturdy box, step stool, or a chin-up bar mounted below your desk. You can even get the wood blocks cut at a local lumber store. Just make sure your desk is sturdy on the blocks and won't tip over.

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