



## Welcome!

This guide is designed to help you be comfortable and productive while using your computer. It may also help you reduce your risk of experiencing painful and disabling injuries or disorders described in the following Health Warning.

The guide includes five sections, with each section accessible from the bottom of each page.

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It only takes a moment to read, but the benefits can be lasting.



### HEALTH WARNING!

Use of a keyboard or mouse may be linked to serious injuries or disorders.

When using a computer, as with many activities, you may experience occasional discomfort in your hands, arms, shoulders, neck, or other parts of your body. However, if you experience symptoms such as persistent or recurring discomfort, pain, throbbing, aching, tingling, numbness, burning sensation, or stiffness, **DO NOT IGNORE THESE WARNING SIGNS. PROMPTLY SEE A QUALIFIED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL**, even if symptoms occur when you are not working at your computer. Symptoms such as these can be associated with painful and sometimes permanently disabling injuries or disorders of the nerves, muscles, tendons, or other parts of the body. These musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) include carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, tenosynovitis, and other conditions.

While researchers are not yet able to answer many questions about MSDs, there is general agreement that many factors may be linked to their occurrence, including: medical and physical conditions, stress and how one copes with it, overall

health, and how a person positions and uses his or her body during work and other activities (including use of a keyboard or mouse). Some studies suggest that the amount of time a person uses a keyboard may also be a factor. Some guidelines that may help you work more comfortably with your computer and possibly reduce your risk of experiencing an MSD can be found in the "Healthy Computing Guide" topic of the "Online User's Guide," provided with the software program on your CD-ROM. If you do not have the CD-ROM for this product, you can access the "Healthy Computing Guide" from <http://www.microsoft.com/hardware>, or (in the United States, only) call 1-800-360-7561 to request a CD-ROM at no charge. If you have questions about how your own lifestyle, activities, or medical or physical condition may be related to MSDs, see a qualified health professional.

For information about arranging your workstation and developing habits that may help to reduce your risk of experiencing an MSD, read this "Healthy Computing Guide." Because there are a variety of factors that may contribute to MSDs, this guide can't provide everything you need to know to prevent an MSD or reduce your risk of experiencing one. For some people, following the suggestions may reduce their risk of experiencing an MSD. For others, it may not. However, many people experience greater comfort and productivity when following these suggestions. Keep in mind that this guide is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified health professional or an employer health policy or program. If you have questions about how your own lifestyle, activities, or medical or physical condition may be related to MSDs, see a qualified health professional.

Click **Next** to learn about posture in **Position Yourself**.




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## Position Yourself

Using your body in comfortable, not awkward, postures is important, whether you're working or playing. Not only can this affect your overall productivity, but also it can influence how comfortable you are while using your computer and may help you avoid MSDs. Keep in mind that changing your posture during extended tasks may also help you avoid discomfort and fatigue.

When working or playing at the computer, adapt your surroundings and arrange your computing equipment to promote a comfortable and relaxed body posture. Because everyone has a unique body size and work environment, we can't tell you exactly how to set up your workstation to avoid discomfort; however, the following suggestions may help to provide you with a more comfortable environment.

### To support your back, consider the following:

- Choose a chair that provides support for your lower back.
- Adjust your work surface height and your chair to assume a comfortable and natural body posture.



### To promote comfortable leg postures, consider the following:



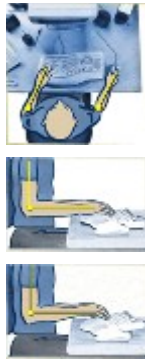
- Clear away items from beneath your desk to allow comfortable leg positions and movement.
- Use a footrest if your feet do not rest comfortably on the floor.

### To minimize reaching and to promote comfortable shoulder and arm postures, consider the following:



- Place your keyboard and mouse or trackball at the same height; these should be at about elbow level. Your upper arms should fall relaxed at your sides.
- When typing, center your keyboard in front of you with your mouse or trackball located close to it.
- Place frequently used items comfortably within arm's reach.

**To promote proper wrist and finger postures, consider the following:**



- Keep your wrists straight while typing and while using a mouse or trackball. Avoid bending your wrists up, down, or to the sides. Use the keyboard legs if they help you maintain a comfortable and straight wrist position.
- Type with your hands and wrists floating above the keyboard, so that you can use your whole arm to reach for distant keys instead of stretching your fingers.

**To minimize neck bending and twisting, consider the following:**

- Center your monitor in front of you. Consider placing your documents directly in front of you and the monitor slightly to the side, if you refer to your documents more frequently than your monitor,
- Consider using a document holder to position your documents near eye level.
- Position the top of the screen near eye level. Bifocal wearers may need to lower the screen or talk to a qualified health professional about glasses customized for computer work.



**To minimize eyestrain, consider the following:**

- Place your monitor at a distance of about arm's length when seated comfortably in front of the monitor.
- Avoid glare. Place your monitor away from light sources that produce glare, or use window blinds to control light levels.
- Remember to clean your screen; if you wear glasses, clean them, also.
- Adjust your monitor brightness, contrast, and font size to levels that are comfortable for you.

Click **Next** to learn about forces in **Go Lightly**.

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## Go Lightly

Physical forces continuously interact with our bodies. We may only think of high-impact forces, such as car crashes, as injuring our bodies. However, low forces may also result in injuries, discomfort, and fatigue if they are repeated or experienced over long periods of time.

### Consider the following types of low forces:



- Dynamic force, or a force that you exert through movement. For example, pressing the keys while typing or clicking the mouse buttons.
- Static force, or a force that you maintain for a period of time. For example, holding your mouse or cradling the phone.
- Contact force, or pressure that occurs when you rest on an edge or hard surface. For example, resting your wrists on the edge of your desk.

### Consider the following suggestions to reduce the effects of low forces on your body:

- Type with a light touch, keeping your hands and fingers relaxed, as it takes little effort to activate keyboard keys. Also, use a light touch when clicking a mouse button or when using a joystick or other gaming controller.
- Avoid resting your palms or wrists on any type of surface while typing. The palm rest, if provided, should only be used during



- breaks from typing.
- Relax your arms and hands when you're not typing. Don't rest on edges, such as the edge of your desk.
- Hold the mouse with a relaxed hand. Do not grip the mouse tightly.
- Adjust your chair so the seat does not press into the back of your knees.

Click **Next** to learn about varying your activities in **Take Breaks**.

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## Take Breaks

Taking breaks can go a long way in helping your body recover from any activity and may help you avoid MSDs. The length and frequency of breaks that are right for you depend on the type of work you are doing. Stopping the activity and relaxing is one way to take a break, but there are other ways, also. For instance, just changing tasks—perhaps from sitting while typing to standing while talking on the phone—can help some muscles relax while others remain productive.

To vary your daily activities and to work productively, consider the following:



- Plan your work and play so that one activity isn't performed for extended periods of time.
- Use different input devices, such as your mouse and keyboard, to accomplish the same task. For example, to perform a scrolling task, you can use the wheel on the mouse or the arrow keys on the keyboard.
- Work more efficiently by using software and hardware features to reduce your effort and increase your productivity. For example, you can press the Windows logo key to open the

**Start** menu.

- Learn about software and hardware features by reading the information that came with your software programs and hardware products.

Click **Next** to learn about overall good health in **Be Healthy**.

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## Be Healthy

A healthy lifestyle can help you perform and enjoy your everyday activities, including the time spent at your computer.

### For overall good health, consider the following:

- Eat a balanced diet and get adequate rest.
- Exercise for overall fitness to give strength and flexibility to your body. Keep in mind that you should consult a qualified health professional to help you choose the stretches and exercises that are right for you.
- Learn to manage stress. One way to reduce stress at work is to plan your work area and schedule so that noise and distractions are kept to a minimum.
- See a qualified health professional if you have questions about how your medical and physical conditions may be related to MSDs. While researchers are not yet able to answer many questions about MSDs, there is general agreement that many factors may be linked to their occurrence, including previous injuries, diabetes, hormonal changes (such as pregnancy), and rheumatoid arthritis.

**Learning more about your health is an important step in staying comfortable and productive while using your computer. Enjoy your computer experience.**

