

"Office Ergonomics: Tips to Create a Safe and Productive Office"

by [Dr. Larry McCarthy, D.C.](#)

Most office workers would agree that their jobs require a delicate balance of key elements, including keyboarding and answering the telephone. Repeating these tasks each day places tremendous strain on our muscles and joints. Improper design and set-up of office space can compound these daily stresses and lead to repetitive strain injuries.

Repetitive strain injuries have skyrocketed in the last two decades due to the increasing reliance on workplace technology. Health Canada has estimated that musculoskeletal disorders, including back pain, cost society \$16.4 billion in combined direct (treatment and rehabilitation) and indirect (lost productivity) costs.

The field of "ergonomics" has emerged in response to these injuries and costs. Ergonomics is the study of workplace equipment design and arrangement aimed at ensuring that individuals can perform safely and efficiently in their work environment.

So, how can you tell if your office environment is safe and conducive to your comfort and productivity? Consider the following questions: At the office, do you:

- Sit for long periods of time?
- Perform repetitive arm or hand movements?
- Spend a lot of time on the telephone?
- Have to turn your head to see your computer monitor?
- Take few or no breaks?
- Sit under dim or flickering lights?
- Spend a lot of time looking down at papers on your desk?
- Experience headaches or neck pain?
- Experience aching, numbness, or tingling in your fingers and hands?
- Experience back pain?

If you answered yes to one or more of the above questions, you could be at risk of developing or already suffering from repetitive strain injuries related to your office set-up.

If you are experiencing pain while at the office or after returning home, you are not alone! In a recent survey of office workers who spent an average of five hours each day on the computer, a staggering 70 per cent reported symptoms in their neck, arms, and hands related to the repetitive tasks they performed. Amazingly, 60 per cent of the surveyed workers had information about ergonomics, but fewer than 10 per cent actually implemented it!

To learn more contact your local chiropractor or Dr. Larry McCarthy at 2291 Kipling Avenue, Suite 120 Etobicoke, ON M9W 4L6 - Phone: 416-747-6678 - Toll-free: 800-796-4801



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