



WORK-RELATED UPPER LIMB DISORDERS

Your condition has resulted from a combination of factors, which include your posture, your work habits, the type of work you do, your workstation arrangement, and your hereditary make-up.

The same basic principles apply to both preventing and recovering from conditions such as this.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE WORK STATION

The Chair

At the computer, uncomfortable chair can indirectly lead to injury by forcing you to work in awkward positions.

A good chair must have: a seat which raises and lowers so your feet are firmly planted on the floor

a seat which is adjustable so your pelvis tilts forwards, allowing your spine to straighten

a back rest which supports your lower spine

The desk or keyboard tray

Most desks are designed for writing which makes them too high for keyboard use, so a removable tray for your keyboard may be helpful. Your forearms should be parallel with the floor when you sit and your feet flat on the floor. If the height of the table is not adjustable, raise your chair and use a foot rest so that your feet remain supported.

The monitor

Put the monitor directly in front of you,

Move your copy holder from one side to the other occasionally, and raise to the same height as the monitor,

Position your monitor so that your eyes are level with the top of the screen

BASIC TYPING TECHNIQUE

1. Keep your wrists straight

For the wrist to be straight, your hand must be parallel to the floor (fig. 2) and the middle finger must be at the centre of the wrist (fig. 1).

Exercise: Stand or sit sideways in front of a full length mirror and bend your elbows until you form a 90° angle. Keep your middle finger in line with your wrist. Do this as often as it takes to remember that feeling in your body.

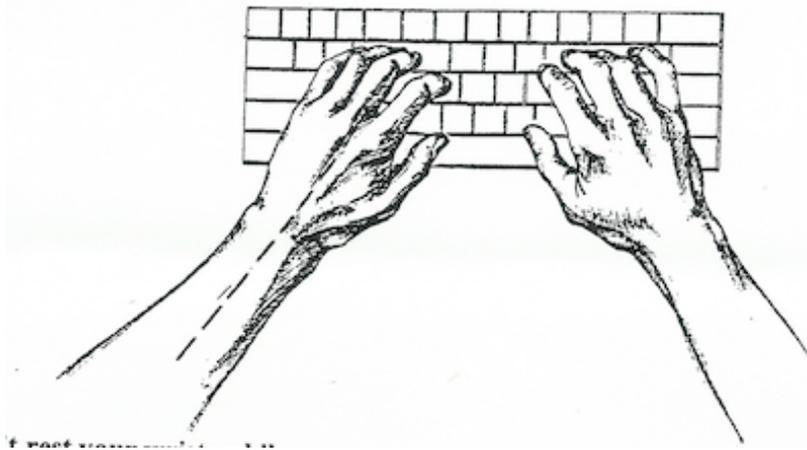


Fig. 1

2. Don't rest your wrists while you type

When you type, let your wrists float above the wrist rest. Rest your wrists only when you are not typing.

Exercise: Holding your hands suspended over the keyboard, make circles in the air just over the keys moving from your shoulder not

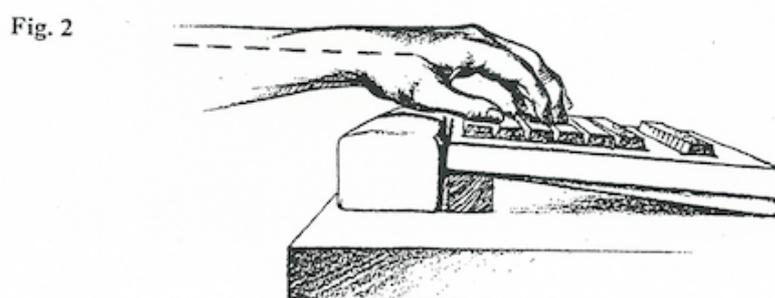


Fig. 2

3. Avoid stretching the fingers to reach far away keys

Move your arm from the shoulder, position your fingers over the key and then strike. Keep the hand in proper alignment while striking.

Exercise: Hold your hands over home row (ASDFG). Then move your whole hand over to the number pad and strike a key. Go back to home row. Continue until you are accustomed to moving your whole hand as a unit instead of reaching with your fingers.

4. Keep your fingers curved

Typing with thumbs and little fingers upraised is a common problem.

Exercise: Let your hands drop to your sides, your fingers will be naturally curved. Keeping this position, bring your hands to the keyboard. Your fingers should be curved so you hit the keys with your fingertips.

5. Relax the thumb

By relaxing the thumb you tend to relax the whole hand.

Exercise: Rest your palm down on the table. Lift your thumb and then let it drop. Pay attention to what both sensations feel like. Keep doing it until it becomes second nature to you.

6. Use fingers from both hands for two-key strokes

Don't stretch your fingers to reach two keys at once. Use one finger from each hand to strike the keys and keep them in a good position while you do.

7. Use a light touch

Consciously try to use the lightest touch possible.

8. Keep your fingernails short

To type with long fingernails you must use the flat of your finger instead of the fingertip, this requires much more effort, therefore keep your nails short.

9. Take frequent breaks

Don't type for so long that your symptoms are aggravated. Take frequent breaks (every ten minutes in severe cases) and do something else to give your hands a rest.

HOW TO SET UP YOUR WORK STATION

