

News & Notes

ERGONOMICS AT HOME

The workplace isn't the only place to think about when considering ergonomics. Many everyday activities performed outside of the workplace can be sources of ergonomic stressors. Follow the below tips to reduce these stressors in your everyday life.

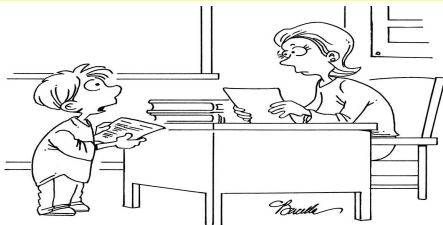
Home Computing/Gaming

Many people these days use their computer or gaming console at home to unwind. But these pursuits at home can provide just as much opportunity for static and awkward postures as work-time computing. If you are a console gamer, remember to take breaks and shift position regularly. Sit directly in front of the screen, preferably at a distance where you can view the entire screen at one time with your neck in a neutral position (i.e., head not tilted back or forward or twisting to the side). Hold your controller with your arms relaxed and by your sides and your wrists straight. Use the lightest touch possible when activating your controller. Ensure there is adequate lighting with no glare on the screen. Turn off or limit the time using the vibration feedback of the controller.

Handheld Devices

Many people are spending more and more time with their tablets/smart phones, but these can be ergonomic stressors. Here are some things to remember when computing on the go:

- 1) Texting and some other small-screen features can be hard on the thumbs. Limit typing time to no more than 10-15 minute sessions.
- 2) Stretch often when spending extended concentrated time on your device.
- 3) If you use a stylus, try to find one with a larger grip handle.
- 4) Think about maintaining a neutral posture while on your device. You may elect to use something to support the arms so that you are not holding them aloft for long periods and/or maintaining a prolonged bent-neck posture.



"These true or false questions...do you want the real truth or the truth according to social media?"

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH

- 1) Why is August the Devil's favorite month?
- 2) What do you call a group of musicians performing at a concert in August?
- 3) Triplets were born in August but their birthday is in December. Why?

Answers on Page 2 Safety Bits & Pieces

Safety Matters

August

Produced by the Insurance Coverage Office

State of Delaware

Issue CXLIV

August 2018

10 Office Ergonomics Tips to Help You Avoid Fatigue

Follow these quick and easy **office ergonomics tips** to decrease fatigue, discomfort and physical stress while also increasing comfort and productivity. Ergonomics" is the science of designing the workstation to fit within the capabilities and limitations of the worker.

The goal of office ergonomics is to design your office work station so that it fits you and allows for a comfortable working environment for maximum productivity and efficiency.

An ergonomically correct office work station will help you avoid fatigue and discomfort – who doesn't want that? If you work in an office environment, regardless of your job title or function, following a few simple guidelines can help you significantly improve your office work station.

Office Ergonomics Tips

How many of the following 10 office ergonomics tips designed to help you avoid fatigue do you follow?

- 1) Make sure that the weight of your arms is supported at all times. If your arms are not supported, the muscles of your neck and shoulders will be crying by the end of the day.
 - 2) Watch your head position, and try to keep the weight of your head directly above its base of support (neck). Don't "crane" your head and neck forward.
 - 3) Don't be a slouch! Slouching puts more pressure on the discs and vertebrae of your back. Use the lumbar support of your chair and avoid sitting in a way that places body weight more on one than on the other. Move your chair as close to your work as possible to avoid leaning and reaching. Make sure to "scoot" your chair in every time you sit down.
 - 4) The monitor should be placed directly in front of you, with the top no higher than eye level. The keyboard should be directly in front of the monitor so you don't have to frequently turn your head and neck.
 - 5) Talking on the phone with the phone receiver jammed between the neck and ear is really bad practice. You know that's true, so don't do it!
 - 6) The keyboard and the mouse should be close enough to prevent excessive reaching which strains the shoulders and arms.
 - 7) Avoid eye strain by making sure that your monitor is not too close, it should be at least an arm's length away.
 - 8) Take steps to control screen glare, and make sure that the monitor is not placed in front of a window or a bright background.
 - 9) You should rest your eyes periodically for several seconds by looking at objects at a distance to give your eyes a break.
 - 10) The feet should not be dangling when you are seated. If your feet don't comfortably reach the floor or there is pressure on the backs of your legs, use a footrest or lower the keyboard and chair.
- Make ergonomic office design a component of your daily safety regimen to avoid fatigue, discomfort and physical stress.

Safety Bits & Pieces

REMOVE TICKS SAFELY

If you or a loved one is bitten, remove the tick promptly. Here's how:

- Grasp the tick's mouthparts against the skin, using pointed tweezers.
- Be patient; the long mouthpart is covered with barbs, so removing it can be difficult and time consuming.
- Pull steadily until you can ease the tick out of the skin.
- DO NOT pull back sharply; this may tear the mouthparts from the body of the tick and leave them embedded in the skin.
- If this happens, don't panic! Embedded mouthparts do not transmit Lyme disease.
- DO NOT squeeze or crush the body of the tick; this may force infected body fluids from the tick into the skin.
- DO NOT apply substances such as petroleum jelly, nail polish, or a lighted match to the tick while it is attached. They may agitate the tick and force more infected fluid into the skin.
- Once you have removed the tick, wash the wound site and your hands with soap and water.
- Observe the bite site over the next two weeks for any signs of an expanding red rash.
- Tick attachment time is important; removing ticks within 36 hours of attachment reduces the risk of infection.
- Testing ticks for infection is possible, but not recommended on a routine basis. You should consult your physician to see if you should save the tick after removal for further evaluation.

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH ANSWERS

- 1) Because it's the hottest month of the year
- 2) An Augchestra
- 3) August is a town!

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE



"Says here that 36% of adult children are now living with their parents."

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

August is designated as Back-to-School Safety Month. Students should follow these backpack guidelines:

- 1) Wear both straps of your backpack.
- 2) No one should carry more than 25 pounds in their backpack. Those under 100 pounds themselves should carry less than 15 pounds.
- 3) Find a pack with wide, padded straps and perhaps a waist belt.
- 4) Position the backpack so that it hangs just below the shoulders and rests on the hips and pelvis.
- 5) Use the smallest backpack possible.

LYME DISEASE MYTHS

What Is Lyme Disease?

This bacterial infection is spread through the bite of a young deer tick or black-legged tick. These eight-legged creatures, about the size of a poppy seed, can be found in wooded and grassy areas throughout the United States, especially in New England and the Rocky Mountains.

Because these ticks are so small, most people don't realize when they're bitten. But the longer a tick stays attached to you, the more likely it is to transmit *Borrelia burgdorferi* (the bacteria that causes Lyme disease), if the tick is a carrier.

If not found and treated, Lyme disease can lead to problems with your joints, heart, and nervous system. It can even affect your memory. Here are some common myths and the facts about Lyme Disease.

Myth: All Ticks Carry Lyme Disease

Fact: There are a number of types of ticks, but only blacklegged ticks (commonly called deer ticks) carry the bacterium that causes Lyme disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Lone star ticks, the American dog tick, the Rocky Mountain wood tick and the brown dog tick do not transmit the disease.

Myth: All Deer Tick Bites Result In Lyme Disease

Fact: First of all, not all deer ticks are infected with the Lyme disease bacterium. "In areas where [Lyme disease] is very common, one out of every four or five ticks might be infected," says Paul Mead, M.D., MPH, chief of epidemiology and surveillance activity at the CDC. "In other areas where it's much rarer, that may be more like one in 100."

Second, if a tick is removed within 24 hours of biting, risk of infection drops dramatically. "It's important to take a definitive step quickly," says Mead. "If you look for ticks every day and — [if you] find them — remove them, you aren't likely to get Lyme disease."

Myth: You Only Have Lyme Disease If You Have The Telltale Bull's Eye Rash

Fact: While it is a very common sign of Lyme disease, and perhaps the most obvious one, not everyone develops the characteristic rash. It shows up in about 80 to 90 percent of people, according to the American Lyme Disease Foundation (ALDF), and usually appears as a red blotch with a red ring emanating from the site of the tick bite. It may be warm to the touch but usually isn't itchy or painful. If you've been bitten by a tick and notice other possible symptoms, like fevers, headaches and muscle pain, consult a doctor as soon as possible.

However, it's not unheard of for someone not to develop the rash — or to simply not see it, according to Mead, especially if it's somewhere hidden like the scalp. "The symptoms sound like flu symptoms, but they occur in the late spring and early summer," Mead says. "If you get those symptoms and live in an area where Lyme disease is common, you may want to consider that possibility."

The longer Lyme disease goes undiagnosed and, therefore, untreated, the more severe the symptoms can become. Untreated infection can cause a paralysis to facial muscles called Bell's palsy, irregular heartbeats, arthritis and short-term memory problems, says Mead.

Myth: There Is No Cure For Lyme Disease

Fact: When treated with antibiotics in the early stages of the disease, Lyme disappears in almost all people — and quickly, too. But in a small number of people, symptoms like muscle and joint pain or memory problems persist. Researchers are currently trying to determine how long a person should be treated with antibiotics in these instances of what is sometimes referred to as "chronic lyme disease," according to the National Institutes of Health.

Experts don't know the exact cause of this cluster of lingering symptoms, more properly called post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome, Mead explains. There is ongoing debate among experts as to whether or not ongoing symptoms reflect continuing infection or "whether it is a post-infectious complication," he says.

Imagine, he explains, a person who has broken his leg. If it doesn't heal right, it's not that it's still *broken*, but it may continue to cause pain or weakness. So too might a prior Lyme infection cause continuing discomfort. Studies have shown, however, that further treatment with antibiotics has no benefit — and can be harmful.



QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"The fear you build up in your mind is worse than the situation that actually exists."

Spencer Johnson
American physician and author
(1938 - 2017)