

LABOUR DEPARTMENT

Occupational Safety and Health Section

SAFETY WHEN WORKING WITH VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS



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This leaflet is a guide for people who work with Visual Display Units (VDUs), and their employers.

ANSWERS TO SOME COMMON QUESTIONS FROM VDU USERS

What are VDUs?

A VDU is essentially a television-type monitor that displays information received from a computer.

Can work with VDUs affect eyesight?

Extensive research has found no evidence that VDUs can cause disease or permanent damage to eyes. But long spells of VDU work can lead to tired eyes and discomfort. Also, by giving your eyes more demanding tasks, it might make you aware of an eyesight problem you had not noticed before. You and your employer can help your eyes by ensuring your VDU is well positioned and properly adjusted, and that the workplace lighting is suitable. The eyes should be tested if you still think there is a problem.

Can VDU work cause headaches?

Headaches may result from several things that occur with VDU work, such as:

- screen glare;
- poor image quality;
- a need for different spectacles;
- stress from the pace of work;
- anxiety about new technology;
- reading the screen for long periods without a break;
- poor posture; or

- a combination of these.

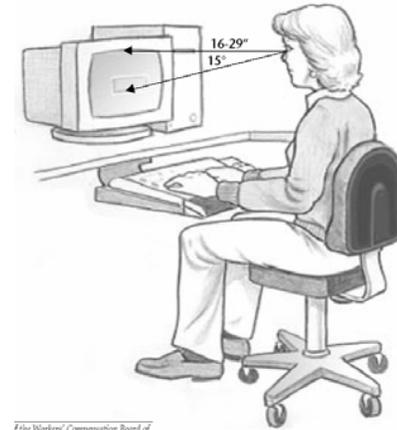


MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO SUIT YOUR NEEDS

Getting comfortable

- Keep elbows close to sides and bent about 90° angle.
- Make sure you have enough work space to take whatever documents or other equipment you need.
- Place monitor directly in front of the keyboard and chair.
- Don't sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change your posture as often as practicable. Some movement is desirable, but avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need (if this happens a lot, rearrange your workstation)
- Adjust your keyboard to get a good typing position. A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting the hands and wrists when not typing.

- Try to keep your wrists straight when typing. Keep a soft touch on the keys and don't overstretch your fingers. Good keyboard technique is important.
- Top of monitor should be at or slightly below eye level.
- Place monitor an arm's length away from you while in a seated position.



Safe working with VDUs requires well-designed work areas with suitable lighting, comfortable and adjustable seating, adequate ventilation, safe and suitable chairs and adequate lighting.

Office stretches

These stretches are very useful when working in the office.

Neck



Sit tall, with back straight and head in neutral. Pull chin back and down slightly

Arms/Wrists



With arm straight, bend wrist so that the fingers are pointing up, gently pull the hand back for an increased stretch, repeat with the fingers pointed downwards (stretch both sides).

Hands/Fingers



Spread fingers out as far as possible and then clench fists, repeat several times.

Shoulders/Upper Back



Grasp hands together, round shoulders and pretend that someone is pulling your arms forward. Then with thumbs turned up pull arms back, squeezing the shoulder blades together.

Portions of this brochure were extracted from:

www.hse.ubc.ca

VDUs and the Computer Posture
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www.consultnet.ie