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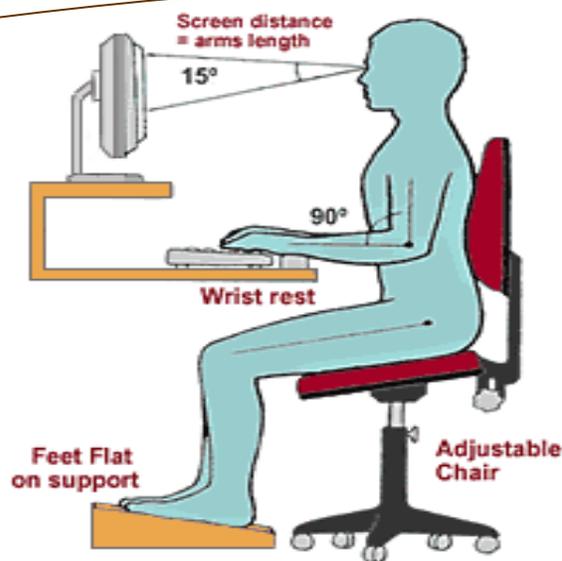
After graduating from Tel-Aviv University in 2000 with a Bachelor of Physiotherapy, Yaara continued her education and successfully completed her Masters in Manual Therapy from the University of Western Ontario in 2010. Yaara brings close to 20 years of physiotherapy experience to our team.

Yaara's developed sense of personalized rehabilitation programs stem from her experience working with patients, families, family physicians and other healthcare providers. Yaara offers her clients assessment and triage, personalized and safe rehabilitation programs (including exercises and self-management techniques), manual therapy and dry needling.

In addition to her clinical practice, Yaara works with the Orthopedic Division of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association as an instructor and facilitator of manual therapy courses.

Outside of work, Yaara is a self-proclaimed chauffeur for her two active teenagers. When able, she enjoys escaping to the mountains throughout the year.

# Physiotherapy



Spending long hours in front of a computer or at your desk? Feeling back or neck pain? Feeling fatigue in your wrists or arms? The next couple of pages will help address some ergonomic tips regarding posture, office set-up and encourage some helpful habits like relaxation and stretches.

The most important component to reduce strain is posture. Poor posture may put our spine and limbs in a position that may add strain to our spine and fatigue to the supporting muscles.

Second consideration is our work station. A poorly designed workstation or one that does not fit you can contribute to repetitive twisting and reaching, prolonged head tilting and eyes straining to look at the screen. Lastly this article will address our work habits. Prolonged sitting without changing position may contribute to strain to your spine and limb muscles, as they fatigue and start aching from reduce circulation. It may also cause fatigue to your eyes.

**Work Surface:** Your computer desk or work surface should be at the height of the elbows when sitting with the arms hanging straight down. If standing at a sit-stand desk, your work surface should still be at elbow height. Bring frequently used items close to you, to avoid reaching far into the desk repeatedly.

## Office Ergonomics: *the good, the bad & the misinformed*

By: Yaara Eilon-Avigdor

**“Using ergonomic principles at work and at home can prevent injuries, bringing many companies to implement work stations that will increase productivity and decrease pain and discomfort.”**

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 19

**Chair:** Your chair is one of the most important items in your workplace. It can encourage good posture and circulation, helping you to avoid discomfort. Select a chair that is comfortable for you; it should be adjustable and provide good support. You should adjust your chair so that:

- Your knees are slightly below your pelvis (seat of chair is tilting slightly downwards) and there is support for your lower back. Lower back support may be improved with a cushion or a rolled-up towel if chair has inadequate support.
- Your feet rest flat on the floor. If your chair is too high you may use a footrest. You should change your sitting position continuously during the day. Sitting in a fixed position for too long can induce fatigue and discomfort.

**Keyboard and mouse:** Position the keyboard so your wrists are straight when elbows are at 90 degrees. Position your mouse at the same height, close to you. You may need to bring the mouse lower and immediately in front of you, to avoid reaching out if used a lot. Use shortcuts, using the keyboard to preform commands, instead of the mouse.

**Monitor:** Try and position the monitor directly in front of you, or use a swivel chair (and not your neck) when using more than one monitor. Your monitor should be at eye level or just below that. Your monitor should be 18"-30" (45-75cm) from your eyes. Just beyond your reach if you extend your arm directly in front of you. Now consider making the font bigger, adjusting the contrast and the brightness to allow your eyes the comfort they need for the next 20 minutes, before you step away from your monitor.

If needed - tilt your screen to avoid glare. Spend a few seconds looking farther away to avoid eye strain.

If you use bifocal glasses, causing you to tilt your head up, when in front of a screen, consider using reading glass, designated for computer use, with blue light protection.

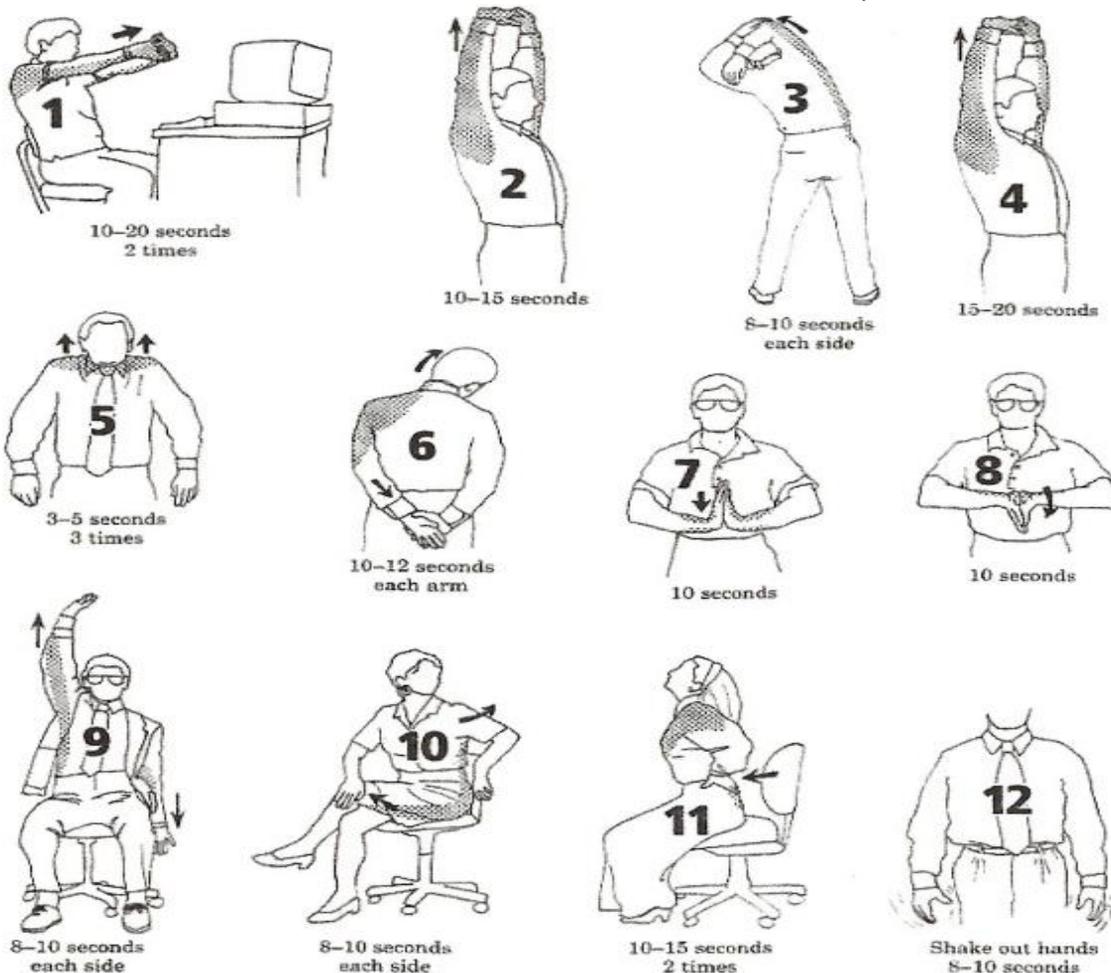
If using a telephone frequently is part of your job description, consider a headset. If this is not available for you, try to avoid cradling the phone between the shoulder and your ear.

Try to alternate sitting with standing and walking.

Aim to stretch and change position every 10-15 min to avoid postural muscle fatigue and improve circulation.

As this article reflects on the proper design of work station furniture and other tools, remember that even the best ergonomics is limited when the person using it does not use their body well. Remember to take breaks, stretch, watch your posture and take care of your well-being during the work day.

Here are some stretches to use at work. These stretches should help reduce pain and should be approached with care. If any of these movements cause or increase your pain, stop and consult a healthcare provider.



The Canadian Physiotherapy Association created these SMART tips to go along with proper ergonomics in the workplace:

**Stretch:** Include regular stretches every 20-30 minutes, moving your hands, arms, shoulders, neck and back. Make sure you move these joints through their full range of motion.

**Move:** Get up from your workstation every 30-60 minutes or use a sit-stand workstation to improve productivity. Improve blood supply to fatigued muscles and improve circulation in your legs.

**Add It Up:** Vary your tasks through the day: keyboarding, filing, telephone calls, meetings. Take every opportunity during the day to walk, stretch and move. Add it up to at least 30 min of moving during the day.

**Reduce Strain:** Improve your posture. Set up your workstation to fit you. Use an ergonomic mouse, keyboard and a headset for long phone conversations.

**Talk to a Physiotherapist:** Avoid waiting! If you experience pain in your wrists, arms neck or back, consult a healthcare provider.