## Tips for Computer Users

Repetitive and prolonged use of a computer keyboard and/or mouse can lead to muscle aches and discomfort. Posture and positioning are important. Try to incorporate the following tips into your work style to avoid problems.

- **Maintain good posture when working.** Sit all the way back in the chair against the backrest. Keep your knees equal to, or lower, than your hips with your feet supported.

- **Keep your elbows in a slightly open angle (100 to 110 degrees) with your wrists in a straight position.** The keyboard tilt can help you attain the correct arm position. A negative tilt (front of keyboard higher than back) helps when working in upright sitting positions. If you recline, a positive tilt (front of the keyboard lower than the back) might be necessary.

- **Avoid overreaching.** Keep the mouse and keyboard within close reach. Center the most frequently used section of the keyboard directly in front of you.

- **Center the monitor in front of you at arm’s length distance and position the top of the monitor 2 to 3 inches above seated eye level.** You should be able to view the screen without turning or tilting your head up or down.

- **Place source documents on a document folder** positioned between your monitor and keyboard. If there is not enough space, place documents on an elevated surface close to your screen.

- **Use good typing technique.** Float your arms above the keyboard and keep your wrist straight when keying. If you use a wristrest, use it to support your palms when pausing, not while keying.

- **Hit the keyboard keys with light force.** The average user keys four times harder than necessary.

- **Keep your wrists straight and hands relaxed** when using your pointer. Don’t hold the pointer with a tight grip or extend fingers above the activation buttons. Avoid moving the pointer with your thumb or wrist. Movement should originate at your shoulder and elbow.

- **Limit repetitive motions.** Reduce keystrokes with macros and software programs such as voice recognition. Reduce pointing device movement with scroll locks and keystroke combinations.

- **Customize your computer settings.** The screen font, contrast, pointer size, speed, and color can be adjusted to maximize comfort and efficiency.

- **Reduce glare.** Place your monitor away from bright lights and windows. Use an optical glass glare filter when necessary.

- **Take eye breaks and intermittently refocus on distant objects.** Try palming your eyes in your hands to reduce eye fatigue.

- **Work at a reasonable pace and take frequent stretch breaks.** Take 1 or 2 minute breaks every 20-30 minutes, and 5 minute breaks every hour. Every few hours, try to get up and move around.

- **Use of non-prescribed medications, or wrist splints, can often be more harmful than helpful.** If you begin to develop symptoms, seek help. Early intervention can prevent future problems.

- **Your lifestyle and physical fitness affect how you feel at work.** Stay in shape by stretching and exercising regularly. Stretches and exercises can be found on our website.