**Preventing Musculoskeletal Disorders**

Do you know what the risks are when working at a desk for prolonged periods? Do you know how display screen equipment should be arranged so users can work without experiencing strain whilst at their workstation?

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**Why?**
According to patient.co.uk, neck pain is one of the most common musculoskeletal complaints. About 2/3 of the population will experience neck pain at some point in their lives. Poorly positioned screens cause users to adopt straining neck positions.

**Monitor**
- Directly in front of the user.
- Roughly an arm’s length away.
- Eyes should be level with a point on the screen 2”-3” below the top.

**Why?**
Materials that cause light to reflect can cause glare and make people adopt awkward postures to avoid it. A lack of room for adjustment means people will retain static positions, leading to stiffness and fatigue in joints.

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Statistics from the Labour Force Survey suggest that there are over 200,000 cases of work-related upper limb disorders (ULD), including repetitive strain, every year in Great Britain. Poorly positioned keyboards places strain on wrists and forearms, which will lead to repetitive strain disorders, e.g. carpal tunnel.

**Why?**
Musculoskeletal disorders are the most common form of occupational ill-health in the UK (in 2014/15, they accounted for an est. 553,000 out of the 1.2 million work-related illnesses reported).

An inappropriate chair will lead to the user adopting poor posture and as a result strain being placed on the upper and lower back. This will lead to musculoskeletal disorders in the back and

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**Work Surface**
- Made of a low-reflectance material, e.g. wood.
- Enough room above and under the surface – user can adjust their legs and arms comfortably.
- Is a suitable height – user’s elbows should be bent at or near a 90 degree angle when resting forearms on it.

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**Stretching and breaks**
- DSE users should get up at least once an hour so to stretch and change their position.
- DSE users should carry out small exercises at or away from their desk to prevent prolonged strain.
- Users should take their designated breaks and break up long periods of DSE work with other tasks.

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