

Office Ergonomics Explained

What is Office Ergonomics?

The study of the interactions between office workers and their work environments.

What is the goal of Office Ergonomics?

Fit the work environment and the tasks to the worker.

What are the Benefits of Office Ergonomics?

Reduced risk of injury
Increased safety
Increased comfort
Increased productivity

What Does FIT Mean?

The first thought that often comes to mind when one thinks of the word FIT is physically fitting into the chair and workstation. There is more to FIT than accommodating physical size and shape. The concept of FIT also means your furniture allows you to move in and out of preferred postures and to perform your job tasks.

What are the Desirable Conditions of FIT?

Desirable conditions that should be met by your furniture to ensure a good FIT:

- 1) Allows you to move both rhythmically and from one fixed posture to another
- 2) Matches you physically
- 3) Supports you and your tasks properly

FIT Conditions = Move + Match + Support

Conditions of FIT

Move Condition of FIT

It has long been known that the human body was designed to move.

The circulatory system, joints and spinal discs require movement for healthy functioning.

As you move, your muscles help to pump blood through your body, which delivers nutrition to, and removes waste from, your tissues. In the absence of good blood flow, not only is food delivery reduced, waste products build up in your tissues that over time makes your muscles feel tired and sore. Movement also contributes to proper lubrication of your joints and proper nutrition of your spinal discs.

Match Condition of FIT

Physically fitting into a chair or workstation is often the first thought that comes to mind when people think of FIT, and perhaps is the easiest condition for a user to judge. You know when your feet are dangling, or if the seat feels too deep or if the work surface seems too high. When physical dimensions are accommodated it helps contribute to good blood flow by minimizing pressure points. Also furniture that is properly matched to your body helps minimize awkward or extreme postures, for example raised shoulders, thereby minimizing unnecessary muscular effort. Some chairs come in different sizes to address population differences in body dimensions. Others offer adjustable features, such as seat height which allows you to match the seat height to your lower leg length. Some work surfaces are adjustable in height and others come with articulating keyboard trays, to allow you to match the keyboard tray height and mouse surface height to approximately the height of your elbow

Support Condition of FIT

Proper support ensures proper alignment of the upper body, which includes the neck, shoulders and upper back. When these body parts are properly supported while performing tasks, the muscles are in the best position to aid breathing. If your lower back is not properly supported when seated, it either straightens or curves the wrong way. Support for the lower back should allow the pelvis to be tilted slightly forward to ensure a natural lumbar curve in the seated posture. Stabilization of joints goes hand in hand with proper alignment. Well-designed and properly used furniture goes a long way to contributing to the support condition of FIT. Chair features such as back/lumbar height, which allows you to position the lumbar support in the curve of your lower back, are designed to provide the support you need. Proper support for the equipment and materials you use throughout your workday helps minimize muscle fatigue and pain. Workstation features such as keyboard tray height, keyboard tray angle, mouse surface height and horizontal mouse position are designed to contribute to proper support