



Ergonomic fixes on a shoestring

Lita Chang, SIA Prevention Services

- 1. Reduce your pinch grip** – Do you often use a pen/pencil that is small in diameter? Do you often have to stop and rest because your hand or wrist is sore or numb after writing for a long period of time? This may be caused by an intense pinch grip which is exerted while holding a thin pen/pencil. Using wide body pens/pencils helps reduce your pinch grip and may help reduce pain and/or numbness in the hand or wrist area. You can add a pen/pencil grip to help increase the body of the pen or as a temporary solution use tape around the pen/pencil to help increase the body of the pen/pencil.
- 2. Alternating hands when using your mouse** can help reduce injury and/or pain in your wrist. Alternating from your dominant to non-dominant hand helps balance the load which may help prevent injury from occurring. Remember when you are using a standard mouse it is important to cup the mouse with your entire palm so that your wrist stays in neutral posture. When moving the mouse, avoid side-to-side wrist motion and utilize your forearm muscles. It is important that you use your forearm to move the mouse as it helps maintain neutral wrist posture and reduce undue stress on the carpal tunnel region.



Neutral Posture



Improper Posture

- 3. Use shortcut keys instead of the mouse** when typing documents in Office Programs (Word, Excel, etc.). Shortcut keys help reduce the repetitive use of the mouse and help reduce injury to your wrist /carpal tunnel area. Here are some examples to help you get started:

Control “Ctrl” B = Bold Control “Ctrl” C = Copy Control “Ctrl” V = Paste
Control “Ctrl” X = Cut Control “Ctrl” S = Save

- To highlight an area, hold the shift key and arrow keys across rather than clicking and dragging the mouse over the desired text.
- If at any time you are in an Office Program (Word, Excel, etc.) you can access the menu by using the alt key to highlight the tool bar and use the arrow keys to move around.

Remember micro-breaks are key in helping to reduce injury! Take the opportunity to rest/stretch your hands and wrists while your computer is “thinking” or while reading a document on your computer screen.

*Do you have unexplained aches and pains? SIA offers **FREE** ergonomic evaluations, education and presentations to member districts within our worker’s compensation pool. To find out more information about this program or who your district liaison is, please contact Lita Chang, Prevention Services at lchang@sia-jpa.org.*