

RSI and ergonomics

Ergonomics and Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)

Ergonomics is a term derived from two Greek words: “ergon”, meaning work and “nomoi”, meaning natural laws. Ergonomists study the human physiology in their relation to their work environment and the demands this puts on the body.

As with computer mice, millions of people worldwide have proven that continuous computer work using a standard mouse and keyboard has a detrimental effect on the human body, in particular the wrist, elbow and shoulder joints of the arm using the mouse and, in many cases, both these sets of joints, including the neck, with people who use the keyboard exclusively or excessively.

Luckily the industry, or at least the international Worker Unions and various governmental departments, have now recognised the risk of prolonged work on a keyboard, and we can now choose from a variety of keyboards and keyboard layouts to ease the strain on our fingers, wrists and arms.

But repetitive strain injury is not new. Since early civilisation has there been evidence and recognition of detrimental effects on the human body from prolonged exposure to or years of repetitive work.

For example, weavers using spinning wheels were known to have developed painful wrists and flat thumbs, Egyptian mummies have shown spinal deformations and injuries amongst the pyramid labour forces from hauling blocks of stone for years. Carpenters have been complaining about wrist injuries for hundreds of years related to repetitive work. And so on.

Repetitive Strain Injury News and Information

[RSI News and Information](#)

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[Amara's RSI Page](#) - What is, tips and help

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[Coalition on New Office Technology](#) - ergonomics

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[Command Corp](#) - The RSI Epidemic

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[Harvard RSI Center](#) - What is and tips for prevention

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[Los Angeles RSI Support Group](#) - Home remedies

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[Paul Marxhausen](#) - Computer Related Repetitive Strain Injury

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[Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) - RSI Information page

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[The RSI Network](#) - RSI Newsletters

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[RSI-Help.org](#) - Information and advice

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[RSI-UK](#) - Self-Help for RSI in the UK

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[Typing Injury FAQ](#) - TIFAQ

RSI Software

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[RSI-Master](#) - Pause and Exercise software

The new pads, combined with a pen, can easily take the place of a computer mouse. In fact, many people prefer this combination over the use of the mouse alone for several reasons. It does not require the hand to remain in the same - cramped - position for long periods of time, and its precision in positioning is better. The pen also allows you to draw. A function which the mouse is poorly suited for.

The goal is to find a method of working at repetitive task without these becoming detrimental to the body as a whole and to specific areas in particular, like the fingers, wrists, arms, shoulders, neck et cetera.

A few simple tips

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take small breaks regularly, preferably accompanied by stretching exercises,

- getting away from the desk for a few minutes
- use ergonomically approved desks and chairs
- have a proper sitting or standing posture for the work involved
- avoid having to hover your hand for long periods of time in the same position - as with the use of a computer mouse
- use a combination of mouse and keyboard for navigation and menu functions (many people use the mouse exclusively to point and click all functions)
- have someone qualified in ergonomics check your workplace, the position of your computer in relation to your body, for example.

Tips and Self-Help

- [The Alexander Technique](#) - Applying Ergonomic Principles in the Workplace
- [Center for Office Technology](#) - Guidelines and information
- [University of Illinois](#) (US) - Computer Ergonomics Self-Help Guide
- [Usernomics](#) - Human Factors & Ergonomics

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS)

- [Eye2Eye](#) - What is CVS?

Wrist pads are designed to reduce wrist fatigue while using computers and calculators. They are part of the mouse pad or placed at the bottom of the keyboard.

Soft sponge balls and gel exercises give your hands, wrist and fingers a rest from cramped and stationary positions by allowing you to exercise all muscles. Exercising the fingers from long hours at repetitive tasks is not new. Chinese and Korean alternative medicine has long recognised these problems. The small box with three metal balls decorated by I Ching symbols is a common site in Asian stores and street markets.

A new opportunity to contract a work environment induced physical problem is the mobile computing development.

Now, instead of sitting for hours behind a desk, we contort ourselves on trains, planes and in automobiles to use our laptops, handhelds and mobile phones. It looks like each new technology brings more danger to our physical selves as well providing new opportunities to work and do business.

Ergonomics news and information

The following sites offer information, definitions and guidelines to apply ergonomics to the working environment, whether it is factory or office work.

What is ergonomics?

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[AFL-CIO](#) - Job Safety

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[Allscan Distributors](#) - Ergonomics at Work

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[Birmingham University](#) (UK) - Industrial Ergonomics Group

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[Canadian Center for Health & Safety](#) - Ergonomics

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[Center for Industrial Ergonomics](#), Louisville (US)

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[Cornell University](#) - Ergonomics Web

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[CTC/IDHF](#) - Industrial Design & Human Factors

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[ErgoWeb](#) - News and information

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[Ergonomics Australia](#) On-Line (AU)

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[Ergonomics.org](#) - Definitions xx

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[Ergonomics in Australia](#) (AU)

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[International Ergonomics Association](#) - News and information

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[Irish Ergonomics Society](#) (IE)

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[National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health](#) (CA) - Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Health

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[The Ergonomics Society](#) (UK)

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[University College of London](#) (UK) - Ergonomics & Human-Computer Interaction

Manufacturers of ergonomic furniture and computer supplies

- [ElastiCat](#) (D)- Patented armrests for computers
- [Ergo Armrest](#) (USA) - Armrests product line
- [Onsight Office Ergonomics](#) - Ergonomic product line

Software

- [Swiss Informaticians Society](#) (CH) - Software Ergonomics

Legal issues

- [CTD News](#) - OSHA Update December 2000
- U.S. Department of Labour - Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
 - [Ergonomics](#)
 - [Recognition of problems](#)

Health Administration (OSHA)