The consequences of poor ergonomics in the workplace can be extremely costly. The cost of a bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome claim, which is fairly common amongst office workers, can range from $15,000 to $100,000+ depending on how aggressively a company manages factors such as days away from work as well as the cost to correct the conditions that led to the injury. This will have a significant impact on your loss experience and you will end up paying most of the costs on the back-end through higher workers compensation premiums!

This hard dollar cost is in addition to the physical discomfort of neck and shoulder pain, back aches, eyestrain, sensitive wrists and hands, and tingling fingers caused by poor ergonomics. These are warning signs that need to be addressed before there is significant injury or damage.

Most of us show up to the office day after day and begin working without thought or consideration given to our work areas. But has that area and related equipment been properly set up and positioned so that we can perform our work with minimal physical stress to our bodies? Will the daily repetitive motions that we perform for hours eventually take a toll on our bodies?

We have all heard of the phrase “work smarter not harder”. This is exactly what ergonomics is all about-fitting the job or task to the person, not vice versa.

Ergonomics has been defined as, “A science that deals with designing and arranging things so that people can use them easily and safely; the parts or qualities of an object’s design that makes it easy to use.”

An entry from Concise Encyclopedia summarizes: “A profession of designing machines, tools, and work environments to best accommodate human performance and behavior. It aims to improve the practicality, efficiency, and safety of a person working with a single machine or device (e.g., using a telephone, driving a car, or operating a computer terminal).”

It’s Not One Size Fits All
Assess the specific job tasks and duties; not everyone has the same work process. It’s important to adapt the working environment for each person. Analyze the workflow and requirements to understand the physical exposures. For example, someone who uses the phone more often than the computer...
needs to prioritize the location of the phone and related items (notepad, pen, etc.) versus a person who rarely uses the phone, yet spends eight or more hours on the computer.

**Where Do I Start?**

**Chairs**

Chairs are the starting point as they are the item that is most frequently set up incorrectly. Ideally, your chair should have the ability to adjust to your physical build (height, tilt, depth of the seat pan, lumbar support and armrests). When seated properly, your feet should be flat on the floor, your thighs parallel to the floor with approximately 2-3 finger widths of space behind your knee to yield adequate leg support. The lumbar support should be positioned and adjusted to support your lower back in a comfortable working position. Armrests must be used judiciously and they should be positioned so that the bottom of your forearm gently rests on top of the armrest when your arms are at a 90-degree angle, with your shoulders relaxed, not hunched.

The goal is to have each element of the chair support your body when you’re in a properly seated position, rather than altering your posture to adapt to a chair that doesn’t fit.

**Keyboard and Monitor Position**

Your monitor should be positioned so that your eyes are level with the bottom of the upper third of the screen. The monitor should be a minimum of an arm’s length away (18” to 24”) and the angle of your keyboard should either be neutral or tilted slightly forward so that your wrists remain straight when typing.

Computing-related injuries are on the rise due to the increased production demands at workstations that create less-than-optimal body positioning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you have discomfort or pain here...</th>
<th>It may be related to this...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOWER BACK</td>
<td>Chair adjustment</td>
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<td>Organization of the workstation</td>
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<td>UPPER BACK</td>
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<td>Keyboard height</td>
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<td>Organization of the workstation</td>
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<td>Monitor height and distance</td>
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<td>Placement of the document</td>
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<td>NECK</td>
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<td>ARMS/SHOULDERS</td>
<td>Chair adjustment</td>
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<td>FOREARMS</td>
<td>Keyboard height</td>
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<td>Organization of the workstation</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRISTS/HANDS</td>
<td>Keyboard height</td>
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<td>Location of the pointing device</td>
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<td>Organization of the workstation</td>
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<tr>
<td>VISION</td>
<td>Monitor height and distance</td>
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<td>Monitor glare</td>
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<td>Placement of the document</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Integrating good ergonomic concepts and principles into job tasks that take up a significant portion of an
The right amount and type of light can influence - positively or negatively - your levels of energy. A mix of fluorescent and incandescent light provides good color and reduces flicker. If possible, incorporate natural light.

Proper Workstation Ergonomics

Don’t Forget to Blink!

Eye strain associated with computer use has become so common nowadays that the American Optometric Association has a nickname for it – C.V.S. or Computer Vision Syndrome.

When viewing a computer screen, the average person blinks 4 times per minute, much less than the normal 22 blinks per minute. Although eye strain may not lead to permanent problems, the discomfort it temporarily causes can affect productivity resulting in lost work time, or even reduced job satisfaction.

Use the “20/20” rule – look away from your computer or close your eyes for 20 seconds every 20 minutes. Use lubricating eye drops (not redness-reducing drops such as Visine®) before you need them and don’t forget to blink!

Risk Management Seminar Series

Victims, Villains & Heroes - Managing Workplace Drama!
Friday, June 13, 2014
7:30am Registration, 8:00am - 10:00am Program

A Demonstration of HR and Risk Management Online Tools
Friday, July 11, 2014
7:30am Registration, 8:00am - 10:00am Program

Ergonomics - A Subject for All Employers! How to Understand the Risks and Prevent Injuries
Friday, August 22, 2014
7:30am Registration, 8:00am - 10:00am Program

Reserve Early, Seating is Limited!
To register, click on the ‘register now’ button in the announcement email, or contact Bethany Mongold at mongold@cavignac.com or call 619-744-0540.

NOTE: Due to the popularity of our seminars and limited space available, we regret we cannot provide refunds or credits with less than 72 hours advance notice of cancellation.
It’s amazing what a few simple stretches throughout the day can do to reduce pain and stiffness. Below are the top 10 suggested office stretches to help prevent pain and injury. All information is intended for your general knowledge only and is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment for specific medical conditions. Consult your physician if you experience pain or discomfort.

**Stretches**

Sit or stand upright. Slide your head straight back until it feels like you have a double chin. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.

Sit or stand upright. Slowly drop your head to the left, trying to touch your left ear to your left shoulder. Do not elevate your shoulder to your ear - keep your shoulder in a relaxed position. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat.

Sit or stand upright. Slowly drop your head back until your neck feels like it has a double chin. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat.

Sit or stand upright. Interlace fingers and lift arms overhead. Keep the elbows straight, press arms as far back as you can. Slowly bend to the left side until you feel a stretch. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat on the right side. Repeat 3-5 times.

Sit or stand upright. Slowly reach your arms overhead. Reach outward and upward until you feel a stretch. Hold 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.

Stand with knees slightly bent. Place palms on lower back, fingers pointing downward. Gently push your palms forward and bend your back backwards. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.

Interlace fingers behind head. Keep elbows straight out to side. Move shoulder blades toward each other. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.

Interlace fingers. Turn palms upwards above your head as you straighten your arms. Stretch and hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.

Interlace fingers and lift arms overhead. Keep the elbows straight, press arms as far back as you can. Slowly bend to the left side until you feel a stretch. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat on the right side. Repeat 3-5 times.

Palms and fingers facing the ceiling. Separate and straighten your fingers. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Bend your fingers at the knuckles. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Make a fist. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.

Slowly bend wrist from side to side as far as possible. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat on other wrist. Repeat 3-5 times.

Arm in the handshaking position. Close the hand such that the fingertips touch the palm of the hand. Make five large circles with your thumb in both directions. Repeat on other thumb.

To reduce the risk of injury and potential loss of work caused by repetitive motion, at a minimum you should consider adjusting your workstation using the basic guidelines discussed previously. You should also consider enlisting the services of a professional ergonomist or a specialist in office ergonomics. The cost to engineer workstations correctly is a fraction of the cost of one surgery to alleviate a repetitive motion type injury which could otherwise have been avoided.

Good ergonomics is good business; healthy employees contribute to a healthy bottom line.
Simple Steps to Cyber Security

Recent Internet bugs and vulnerabilities have had a widespread impact, compromising the security of computers as well as personal information you may enter online.

Although you can’t stop criminals from attempting a cyber attack, you can take several steps to reduce your risk of having your personal information stolen, misused or deleted. Start by using strong passwords, avoiding malware and viruses, and protecting yourself against scams and security breaches.

Password security
- Do not use the same password for multiple accounts, especially important accounts such as online banking or an online store with your credit card on file.
- Passwords should not be a word found in the dictionary or a combination easily guessed by a friend; be creative and mix up letters, numbers and symbols to make a strong password.
- Passwords should be periodically changed, especially in the wake of the Heartbleed bug that left much encrypted information vulnerable to exploitation.

Malware
- Don’t click on links or download attachments in unsolicited emails.
- Don’t download anything from sites you don’t trust.
- Don’t enter personal information on a website if you clicked on a link; instead, type the URL into the address bar to make sure you go to the site you want.
- Scan all external devices, such as USB flash drives, for viruses and malicious software (malware) before using.
- Install antivirus security software.

Scams and other security breaches
- Never email personal information on an unsecured Wi-Fi network; the network can be hacked and the information accessed by unauthorized users.
- Don’t disclose private information unless necessary, and always verify the source if asked to input sensitive information into a website or email.
- Before entering credit card numbers or other payment information when shopping online, double-check that you’re on the website you think you are and check the URL for “https,” which is a general indication that the page is encrypted for your security. Some browsers also display a “lock” icon to indicate that a website is secure.

The most common firework injuries are burns, with hands and fingers the likeliest places to be harmed.

Firework Safety Month

As warmer weather arrives and Independence Day approaches, fireworks may be part of your various summer celebrations. While the bright colors and flashing lights of fireworks are a great addition to a summer party, make sure you use common sense and a few basic safety guidelines to keep the fun from turning into a fire or injury.

- Buy fireworks from a reputable source; don’t alter them and don’t use homemade fireworks.
- States have different rules for fireworks; if they’re illegal, leave them to the professionals.
- Follow local laws when shooting and report any illegal explosives.
- A designated adult should supervise all fireworks, and children should not handle them.
- Use fireworks outside in a clear area away from buildings, vehicles and animals.
- Have water buckets or a hose nearby.
- Soak duds and spent fireworks in water before disposing of them in the trash.
- Never consume alcohol before shooting fireworks.
- Light fireworks one at a time.
Summertime Swimming

Summer is a great time to go swimming, and pools and beaches come to life with families enjoying the water. Swimming is a form of cardio exercise as well as a fun way to get a reprieve from the hot sun. Follow these tips to keep your swimming safe:

• Never swim alone. The buddy system should always be in effect, and it’s best if there is a lifeguard present.
• Always supervise children who are in or near water. If a child is missing, check the water first—seconds count if the child is underwater.
• Do not dive in shallow or unfamiliar water, and be aware of hidden obstacles that might be in the water.
• Stay hydrated by drinking water; avoid caffeine and especially alcohol.
• Don’t swallow the water you’re swimming in, and avoid swimming with open wounds—you don’t want to allow harmful germs into your body.
• Reapply sunscreen frequently; the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) no longer allows sunscreen products to claim to be “waterproof” because, depending on the sunscreen you choose, they typically only offer the stated SPF protection for up to 40 or 80 minutes when in water.

Grilled Vegetables

It’s about that time of year when many people are thinking about firing up the grill. Here’s a great grilled vegetable recipe to celebrate summer’s approach.

• 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
• 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
• 3 sweet potatoes, cut into 1-inch slices
• 3 corn cobs, cut into 2-inch sections
• 1 eggplant, cut into 1/2-inch slices
• 12 green onions, trimmed

Mix oil and garlic in a large bowl. Add vegetables and toss. Place vegetables on broiler pan or grill. Cook 10 minutes, turning twice until vegetables are tender. Place vegetables on platter and serve.

Yield: 6 servings. Each serving provides 190 calories, 5g of fat, 0g of saturated fat, 0mg of cholesterol, 45mg of sodium and 8g of fiber.

Source: USDA

Healthy Grilling

Grilling is a popular summertime cooking option, and a cookout is a great way to bring family and friends together on a warm afternoon. Here’s a few tips to make sure the grill is a boost to your diet:

• Toss veggies on the grill—zucchini, eggplant, corn, asparagus and bell peppers are all great grilling veggies.
• Trim fat off meat—not only does this keep you from eating excess fat, but it also reduces potentially cancer-causing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) from forming in the smoke that coats the meat after fat hits the flames.
• Avoid charred parts of grilled meat—the black portions of your hamburger can contain heterocyclic amines (HCAs), which are another carcinogenic compound formed when meat is exposed to high heat.
• Use a spicy marinade—it can make your grilled meat healthier by helping to reduce the number of HCAs that attach to the meat during cooking.
SPOTLIGHT ON
COMMUNITY

Cavignac & Associates is proud to support local and non-profit civic organizations, including Fresh Start Surgical Gifts.

Mission
Fresh Start Surgical Gifts is one of the most dedicated charities for children. They transform the lives of disadvantaged infants, children, and teens suffering from physical deformities caused by birth defects, accidents, abuse, or disease through the gift of reconstructive surgery and related healthcare services.

What They Have Accomplished:
Since their inception, they have treated 6,528 patients. There have been 15,103 treatments provided and the amount donated in medical care has been more than $26.7 million.

For more information about Fresh Start Surgical Gifts visit: www.freshstart.org