

## Tips to prevent discomfort while using your computer



### The keyboard

- Position the keyboard just below elbow height.
- Try different keyboard styles to find the one that works best for you.
- A padded wrist rest helps support the wrist and protect it from sharp table edges.



### The mouse

- Position the mouse just below elbow height on the keyboard tray or a separate pullout tray.
- Try different mouse styles to find the type that is most comfortable for you.
- Alternate input devices such as a roller ball may be more comfortable for you.



### The monitor

- Position the monitor between 18" and 26" away, depending on your eyesight.
- The screen top should be at eye level.
- Position the monitor directly in front of you.
- Get special computing glasses if you wear bifocals. This will prevent head tilting.
- When you are typing, your head should be erect and centered over your shoulders.



### Lighting

- Place the monitor perpendicular to windows.
- Check the screen for "hot spots" from overhead lighting. Reposition the screen away from them or purchase anti-glare devices.
- Use task lighting whenever possible.



### The chair

- Try many chairs to find the one that fits you best.
- The chair should have five rolling casters on the base to increase stability and allow you to move the chair easily.
- The seat pan should support at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of your thighs. You should be able to sit with your back supported and not have the back of your knees touch the seat.
- The backrest should be slightly tilted so that you can lean back as you are typing.
- The seat height should be adjusted so your feet are flat on the floor with your knees slightly lower than your hips. If necessary, place a box under your feet.
- While armrests are nice, they are only useful if they actually support your arms at the right height. Your shoulders should be relaxed and your arms at right angles when you type. Many armrests are too wide or too high in commercial chairs.

*N. Baker & K. Jacobs (1999). Boston University Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. Occupational Therapy Department.*