Proper posture and Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)

Incorrect posture, repetitive motions such as typing, using a mouse and sitting for long periods of time in front of a computer screen are leading causes of MSDs in students and employees. These actions result in injuries or disorders of the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, cartilage, and spinal discs.
Most common MSDs are:

•Tendonitis

•Back and neck pain

•Carpal tunnel syndrome - result in numbness, tingling, weakness, or muscle atrophy in the hand and fingers

Proper posture:

•Keeps bones and joints in the correct alignment so that muscles are being used properly.

•Helps decrease the abnormal wearing of joint surfaces that could result in arthritis.

•Decreases the stress on ligaments holding the joints of the spine together.

•Prevents the spine from becoming fixed in abnormal positions.

•Prevents fatigue because muscles are being used more efficiently, allowing the body to use less energy.

•Prevents strain or overuse problems.

•Prevents backache and muscular pain.

•Contributes to a good appearance.

How to maintain proper posture while using a computer

✓Sit up with **back straight** and your shoulders back and down.
✓Bend your knees at a right angle. Keep your knees even with or slightly higher than your hips (use a foot rest).
✓Do not cross your legs.
✓**Adjust** your chair height and work station so you can sit up close to your desk.
✓Keep your elbows in a slightly open angle with your wrists in a straight position. Keep your wrists straight and hand relaxed when using the mouse.
✓Rest your arms on your chair or desk, keeping your shoulders **relaxed**.
✓Avoid overreaching. Keep the mouse and keyboard within close reach.
✓**Center** the monitor in front of you at arm's length distance and position the top the center of monitor at your eye level. You should be able to view the screen without turning or tilting your head up or down.
✓**Reduce glare**. Turn your monitor away from bright lights and windows.
✓Take eye **breaks** and focus on distant objects.
✓Take frequent stretch breaks while working on a computer. Take 1 or 2 minutes breaks every 20-30 minutes. Try to get up and **move around**.

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Sources: http://www.cdc.gov; www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/oehmsd3.pdf;freepik.com

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