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What is Ergonomics?

The CDC[1] defines ergonomics as "the science of fitting workplace conditions and job demands to the capabilities of the working population." This requires careful assessment of environmental factors that contribute to the way you work.

Good workspace design focuses on strategies to reduce stress, increase productivity, eliminate repetitive movements[2] that lead to injury, and reduce the overuse of muscles that place unnecessary strain on your musculoskeletal system.

Here are some elements to consider as you assess ergonomics in your workspace:

Seating. Be sure your chair has an arm rest, head support, and adjustable height options. Do your best to avoid sitting in the same position for long periods of time. Taking micro breaks throughout the day can help increase blood flow and relieve tense muscles.

Posture. Awkward postures and repetitive body movements can lead to injuries. Pay careful attention to how you sit and stand throughout the day and make posture corrections as needed.

Desk. Adjust your desk height to make sure it is at a comfortable level for you. When the height of your desk is misaligned, it can lead to muscle strain and shoulder tension. The position of your keyboard, computer monitor, and mouse can also make a difference.

Noise. While not as obvious as some of the others, background noise is linked to increased muscle tension, low productivity, and even hearing loss in some cases. Noise canceling headphones may be an option for those who are particularly sensitive to sound.

Gait. The way you walk and move your body can also have a big impact on your muscles and ligaments, especially if you routinely carry heavy objects.

Paying attention to the elements that contribute to the ergonomics of your workspace can help you avoid injuries and improve your overall wellbeing.

1. https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ergonomics/ergoprimer/default.html
2. https://health.clevelandclinic.org/heres-how-to-set-up-your-office-to-avoid-aches-pain/