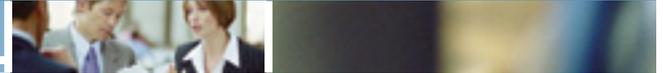


# I N F O Bulletin

www.inalco.com

Information Bulletin for Group Insurance Plan Administrators and Benefit Advisors


**INDUSTRIAL ALLIANCE**  
INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES INC.


## Ergonomics in the workplace

Preventing injuries rather  
than healing them



A sensation of weakness and tingling in the hands, and pain in the elbows, forearms and shoulders at the end of the workday is more common than you would think. It may seem strange that an activity as common as typing on a keyboard or handling a mouse, if not performed correctly, could lead to **repetitive strain injury (RSI)**. Similar to working on a construction site, office work involves the constant use of the same muscles, tendons, blood vessels, ligaments, nerves, joints and soft tissue. Sustained positions and repetitive movements are the two risk factors most often associated with RSI.

When pain appears, most people tend to ignore it and continue to push their body. Their state deteriorates and the problem can become chronic. If too much time elapses before taking action, there might be permanent damage. The impact that RSI has on productivity, absenteeism and claims is well known. The phenomenon has taken on such proportions that the World Health Organization has named the last day of

February *International Repetitive Strain Injuries Awareness Day*. There are ways to prevent these injuries and keep employees healthy, satisfied and efficient. Ergonomics plays a key role in most of these preventive measures.

### What is ergonomics?

Ergonomics is the science of the relationship between people and their workplace to improve safety, simplify the performance of tasks and increase efficiency. It involves raising employee awareness about the risk factors and causes of injuries and encouraging them to adopt good habits in terms of posture and body movement. Ergonomics should pervade all tasks in all sectors. Since a great deal of time is spent at work, more attention should be focused on the risk that could develop there. Many businesses offer their employees ergonomic assessment services to help them adapt their workstation to prevent injuries. Sometimes an assessment reveals that not only can simple adjustments like adding a keyboard tray or a footrest provide comfort to an employee, but they also protect them.

### Importance of adapting a workstation

- Improve posture in the workstation
- Reduce discomfort and muscle tension
- Avoid repetitive strain injuries
  - ▶ Spinal cord
    - ▶ Cervical
    - ▶ Dorsal
    - ▶ Lumbar
  - ▶ Lower limbs
  - ▶ Upper limbs
    - ▶ Shoulders
    - ▶ Arms
    - ▶ Forearms
    - ▶ Hands, fingers
- Avoid visual discomfort
- Increase energy reserves
- Reduce stress
- Stay in a good mood



## Ergonomics in the workplace

### Habits to develop

#### Good posture

In a sitting position, feet should be flat on the ground, the knees at a right angle and the pelvis towards the front. The lower back should be slightly arched and the top of the back in its natural, slightly rounded position. Shoulders, arms and elbows should be in their natural position, which is close to the body with the hands in front. The head should be centred on the shoulders.

#### An appropriate workstation

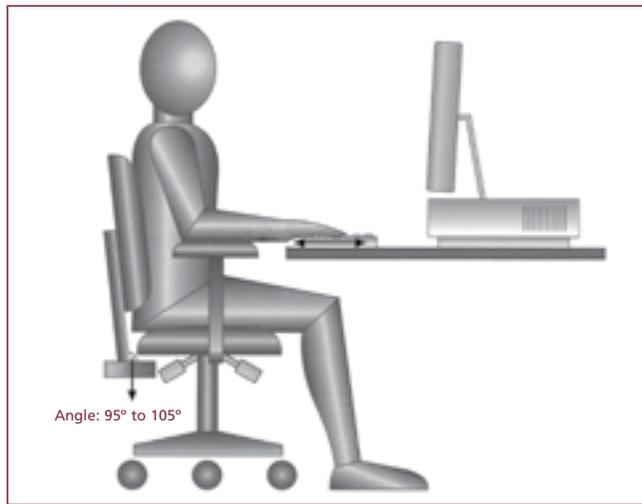
The chair plays a key role in body support and should be fully adjustable. The keyboard should be directly in front of the user and just above the navel. When typing, the arms should form a 90-degree angle and the mouse should be placed at the right for a right-handed person and at the left for a left-handed person, at a distance that is easy to access. The monitor should be placed directly in front, at eye level. If an employee spends more than 25% of their time on the phone, wearing a headset will be beneficial.

#### A good keyboard technique

The wrists should be straight and fingers should glide over the keys, so that they can hit them lightly. It is important not to hammer the keys. The mouse should be handled gently and unnecessary clicks should be avoided.

#### Regular stretch breaks

It is essential to get up and stretch wrists, fingers, elbows, shoulders, the neck and upper back every 15 or 20 minutes (see next page for simple exercises to perform). The eyes also need to rest. Moving 60 cm away from the computer screen for several seconds helps to readjust your sight. Blinking the eyes often or forcing a yawn to produce tears fights dryness and eye irritation.

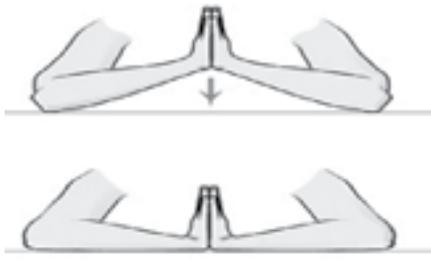
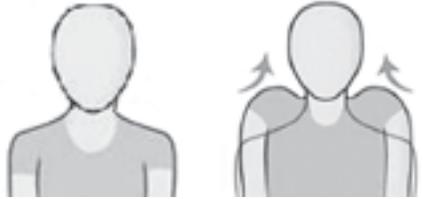
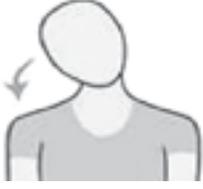
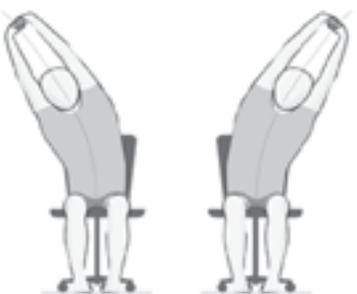


Source:

Canadian Medical Association  
 Réseau de recherche en santé et en sécurité du travail du Québec  
 Human Resources and Skills Development Canada





Hand and forearm exercises	Neck and shoulder exercises	Back stretches
<p>Hold the following positions for five seconds and do the exercise twice for each hand.</p>	<p>Hold the following positions for five seconds and do the exercise three times on each side, if applicable.</p>	<p>Hold the following positions for five seconds and do the exercise three times on each side, if applicable.</p>
<p><b>1. Lateral wrist flexion</b></p>  <p><b>2. Place one hand on the fingers of the other hand. Slowly bend your wrist down until you feel a stretch.</b></p>  <p><b>3. Sitting with your elbows on the table and palms together, slowly lower your wrists to the table until you feel a stretch. Be sure to keep your palms together throughout the exercise.</b></p> 	<p><b>1. Raise your shoulders until you feel slight tension in your neck and shoulders.</b></p>  <p><b>2. Drop your head slowly to one side, trying to touch your ear to your shoulder.</b></p>  <p><b>3. Slowly roll your shoulders backwards.</b></p>  <p><b>4. Sitting or standing upright, without lifting your chin, glide your head straight back. You know you're doing this exercise right if it gives you the feeling of a double chin.</b></p> 	<p><b>1. Interlace your fingers. Lift your arms over your head and press them as far back as you can without bending your elbows. To stretch your sides, slowly lean to the left and then to the right.</b></p>  <p><b>2. Hold your right arm with your left hand just above the elbow. Gently push your elbow toward your left shoulder.</b></p>  <p><b>3. Grasp the shin of your left leg. Lift the leg off the floor. Bend forward (curling your back) and reach your nose to your knee.</b></p> 



As the New Year dawns, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for your trust and loyalty. Wishing you and your loved ones health, joy and serenity in the New Year.

Your Group Insurance Team



## Industrial Alliance Service Standards

Our E-claims service was successfully launched on October 1. The performance results shown below for health and dental claim payments include all types of claims: paper claims, claims electronically submitted by service providers and E-claims.

During the October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011 period, we struggled to reach our targeted service standards, but as of November we're finally on track with an 85% performance rate.

### Service standard score card (period: October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011)

	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
<b>Customer Service Center</b>		
% of calls answered in 30 seconds	80%	<b>56%</b>
<b>Claims</b>		
% of <b>all</b> health & dental claims processed in 5 days*	85%	<b>90%</b>
% of short-term disability claims handled in 5 days*	85%	<b>90%</b>
% of long-term disability claims handled in 10 days*	85%	<b>90%</b>
<b>Administration – Policy Implementation</b>		
% of new policies issued in 20 days*	80%	<b>90%</b>

\*Measured in business days

## Thank you for participating in the eContest!

On December 1, we had the pleasure of awarding our last iPod nano with a Multi-Touch screen and 16 GB flash memory to Caleb Goff of Alberta!

Congratulations to our 14 winners:

Michel Alie	Paul Maynard	Robert Desbiens
Luc Desrosiers	Louis Nadeau	Sarvesh Goel
Danielle Ferland	Sara Webb	Claire Harrisson
Stéphane Larocque	Natalie Lauzon	Caleb Goff
Shannon Fowler	Samira Kablouti	

They all signed up for direct deposit and e-notification for their health and dental claim payments. Plan members can still take advantage of these convenient services while at the same time helping the environment. All they have to do is go to <http://www.inalco.com/english/group/group-insurance/member/internet/enrolment.jsp> to sign up.

Simple, efficient, eco-friendly.



## About Industrial Alliance

Industrial Alliance is a life and health insurance company that offers a wide range of insurance and financial products. The fourth largest life and health insurance company in Canada, Industrial Alliance is at the head of a large financial group with operations across the country, as well as in the United States. Industrial Alliance contributes to the financial wellbeing of over three million Canadians and manages and administers over \$70 billion in assets.

The INFO Bulletin is presented to you by Industrial Alliance.