# Mouse Ergonomics

Whether you spend five minutes or five hours using your mouse, these suggestions can help you stay comfortable and productive.

Recent research suggests that long periods of repetitive tasks or an improperly set-up workspace may lead to physical discomfort or injury to hands, wrists, arms, neck, or back. If you feel pain, numbness, weakness, swelling, burning, cramping, or stiffness in these areas, see a qualified health professional.
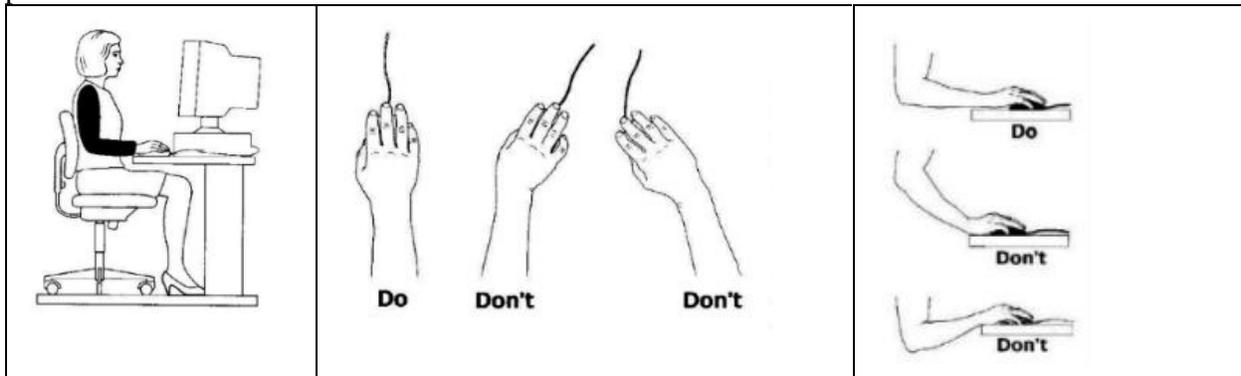
Use these tips to maximize your comfort.
Make sure that your workspace is set up properly...

Your keyboard should be directly in front of you with your mouse sitting next to it.
Your elbow should be next to your side. Place your mouse within easy reach.

DO

Do adjust the height of your chair and table to have the mouse at elbow height.

Do have your elbow next to your side with your forearm parallel to the floor or slightly bent down. Position your keyboard and mouse so you do not have to reach.

Keep your shoulders, arms, wrists, and hands relaxed and comfortable as you work...

To keep your shoulders, arms, wrists, and hands relaxed as you work, let them hang loosely at your sides for a moment, allowing them to dangle toward the floor and to become relaxed. Try to maintain this relaxed feeling while you work.

When you are ready to use your mouse, avoid resting your wrists on sharp edges, or on your desktop.

As you use your mouse, make sure that your elbow is next to your side. Keep your wrist relaxed and straight - don't bend it up, down, or to either side. Keep your shoulders relaxed. Do not

hunch or shrug.

Take Break

Get up and walk around at least twice every hour. Some studies suggest staying too long in one position - or repeating the same motion many times - may cause discomfort and injury. Do something different with your hands and arms for a while. Vary your tasks throughout the day.

Rest your hand lightly on the mouse or trackball

You'll find it easier and more comfortable to get the control you want if you're not squeezing the mouse too tightly.

Use keyboard shortcuts whenever possible. Non-stop use of a mouse or track-ball can lead to muscle strain in your fingers, hands, wrists, arms or shoulders. Investigate the keyboard shortcuts available in your most used design programs, since this will offload the need to drag, drop and click the mouse as much – significantly reducing the wear and tear on your body.

Placement is key. Try moving the mouse closer to your body, as that also will reduce the strain on your arm and shoulder. As a guideline, your arm should be by your side with your elbow at about 90 degrees and your wrist straight and parallel to the desk. Don't bend your wrist upward – that's a recipe for carpal tunnel.

Always use a mouse pad. No matter how silly or useless mousepads seem, they actually are good for you and should be used at all times. Make sure the one you choose has a surface covering that allows free, easy movement. A clean space on your desk is not an appropriate alternative, since it does not provide the necessary padding or friction of a real mouse pad and could lead to further muscle strain.

Clean the mouse ball. Mouse balls are dust magnets. Make sure you clean yours on a regular basis. It will roll much better if it's clean, and you won't be left wondering why your mouse isn't going where you want or having to struggle to get it to obey your commands.

Be alert to signs of discomfort

Contact a doctor if you experience pain, tenderness, swelling, burning, cramping, stiffness, or numbness in your fingers, hands, wrists, arms, or shoulders.