

Stress Free Workspace!

By

Ruth Gordon Howard

You have been sitting at your desk working for hours. The muscles in your neck and back are starting to give you the signal, "SOS tension!" The secret to preventing tension that can lead to back problems and a host of other ailments you don't want is simple. Create an environment at home and at work that is stress free. Women like to take charge. So, why not improve your health and take charge at your desk?

The Clutter Monster

Clean your desk and get rid of clutter. A disorganized desk and clutter produce stress and tension. Don't wait until you have time to do it because that day will never come. If you haven't used something in three months, throw it away or store it. Right now there are probably things on your desk you don't need. Save truly important papers and file them. You will get more work done with less effort in a newly organized work area. It's the first important step for "at your desk health." Don't let the clutter monster rule. When in doubt, throw it out.

Getting "Comfy"

One of the most important steps you can take to create an efficient work area is often the most overlooked. Create a comfortable workspace. It may seem comfortable and relaxing to sit down but think again. Over seventy percent of women now sit on the job, and this contributes to low back pain, neck pain, eye strain, abdominal pain and leg pain. When you sit down, is your chair the right height and does it provide support for your lower back? If not, head over to the office supply store and check out the chairs. A great chair can be a lifesaver for the woman hard at work. When you're sitting at your desk, your feet should be flat on the floor. If all else fails, and you can't get a chair with back support, roll up a small towel and tape it to the chair where your lower back rests. A few small changes can make all the difference.

Computers Rule

The Institute of Office Ergonomics estimates that at least 30 percent of computer users are uncomfortable as they work. If you are one of the uncomfortable ones, take heart. You may be a few biomechanical adjustments away from feeling great. Adjust your computer screen so it's centered directly in front of you, with the top of the monitor near eye level

Raise or lower the keyboard so your wrists are straight and not bent up or down. There are several helpful gadgets on the market to make these changes easy for you. To avoid eye strain, adjust lighting to control the glare on your screen. Keep your head and neck upright and relaxed.

Twisting the Day Away

Your cell phone rings and you can't find it. You turn quickly as you try to grab the phone and you knock over a pile of papers. You twist around every time you create a document

because your printer is inconveniently located. Sound familiar? The placement of the equipment you use can make or break your plan for desk health. Keep everything you use within easy reach. Protect your back by avoiding quick, forceful twists and turns. Assess how often you use each office item and think carefully about where to place it for convenience and comfort.

Take a Break

Take a break--frequently. Staying active while in your chair can help prevent back problems, but the key is to move safely. Back injuries can occur if you move suddenly. Move as a unit and keep your hips and feet pointed in the same direction. Try a one minute workout by opening and closing your hands, rolling your shoulders, inhaling deeply three times and standing up and down. If you want to cut loose, put your favorite music on, stand up and march in place for five minutes. Guaranteed to energize and refresh.

Finally Stress Free

For the final step, add the extras that will make working more enjoyable. Create an environment that is beautiful, restful and simply makes you feel good. Don't underestimate what a difference this makes in your mental attitude. Fresh flowers, pictures of scenes that refresh you mentally or a nesting item on your desk that fills your mind with the very best memories. Make a statement that says this desk is mine and one of a kind. Create a stress free workspace. You may be a hard working woman, but you don't have to be uncomfortable as you get the job done.

Copyright © 2004 Ruth Gordon Howard

Ruth Gordon Howard is the "energy professional." She has helped thousands of women live healthier lives. Visit her website at: www.RuthGordonHoward.com