



Ergonomic Tips for Using Laptops

Laptop computers are lightweight, portable and convenient, allowing us to keep in touch with the home, office and school from almost anywhere. Unfortunately, the laptop's compact design, with attached screen and keyboard, forces laptop users into awkward postures. When the screen is at the right height, the keyboard position is too high; and when the keyboard is at the right height, the screen is too low. Laptops pose less risk when used for short periods of time, but nowadays, many people use laptops as their main computer. This creates an ongoing tradeoff between poor neck/head posture and poor hand/wrist posture. **The following are best practices to reduce ergonomic risk factors when using laptops:**



Setting up your laptop:

- Use a docking station whenever possible to more closely resemble a standard desktop workstation where input devices can be attached.
- Attach a regular size, external keyboard and pointing device to the laptop, and place them on an adjustable keyboard tray or desk.
- They should be positioned at or slightly below elbow height.
- Angle the screen to reduce bending your head forward. Use your eyes instead of your neck to adjust your line of vision.
- Do not use laptop risers with a positive tilt.
- Clean your screen often as dust can make it difficult to read and may increase eyestrain.
- Use a document holder to angle source documents.
- Take frequent "micro/muscle" breaks while using laptop to avoid fatigue.



A heavy carrying case is hard on your shoulders and places an asymmetric load on the torso which can lead to shoulder, neck and back problems. **When carrying your laptop try the following:**

- Use a wheeled case or a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a sturdy hip belt.
- Switch hands or shoulders frequently when using a carrying case with a handle or shoulder strap.
- Lighten your load by purchasing a lightweight laptop.
- Reduce the weight in your carrying case by removing unnecessary items, such as battery packs and cables.
- When possible, eliminate the need to carry your laptop by using portable media storage such as flash drives.



This Alliant Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.