KEYBOARD USE

There appears to be a relationship between typing style and onset of hand and wrist symptoms for some computer users. Following are some key components of typing styles and tips on how to achieve improved arm and hand positions when typing.

Wrong Typing Style
- The arms are reaching forward, the wrists are resting on the desk or on a wrist rest, and the fingers are reaching up to the keys. This awkward position results in marked increased stress to the structures of the hand and fingers and can result in discomfort.

Correct Typing Style
- Upper arm should remain vertical, forearms horizontal, and wrists floating in a straight position to allow the hands and fingers to maintain a rounded position with the fingers pointing down to the keys.
- Movement to the keys should occur through small movements at the shoulder instead of excessive reaching with the fingers.

Reasons Why Individuals Adopt a Wrong Position
- Inadequate distance between the monitor and individual.
- Slouching in the chair with the upper back leaned backward results in the need to reach forward for the keyboard (if you prefer not to change sitting position, place the keyboard in your lap rather than reach forward to a computer table).
- Many individuals have severely rounded shoulders resulting in constant stress to the shoulder/neck area as a result of poor posture (relief comes from any type of support to help reduce the preexisting stress to the shoulder/neck area, like supporting the weight of their arms through the use of arm rests on the chair rather than a wrist rest).
- Using wrist rests when typing (they should be used to rest the wrist when not typing).
- Excessive side-to-side deviation of the wrist when the individual tries to keep his/her fingers aligned with the 'home row' (it is unnecessary, let hands move away to allow the wrists to remain straight and move to the keys through small movements at the shoulder instead of reaching excessively with the fingers or deviating the wrist).
- The mouse is not at the same level as the keyboard (it should be).

Visit www.ehs.ucr.edu for additional information or call EH&S at 827-5528 if you have any questions.