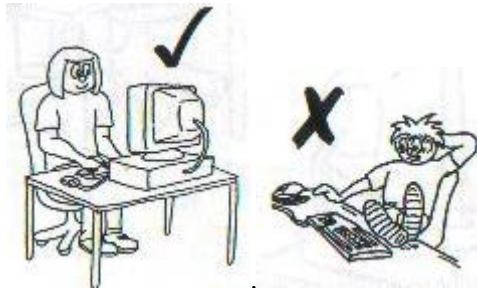


## SAFER KEYBOARDING FOR KIDS

### Set your keyboard up correctly:

- (1) The keyboard should be close to you on the lower part of the desk. Adjust your chair height so that your arms and thighs are more or less parallel to the ground. You may need a footrest.
- (2) The keyboard should tilt **away** from you, so that your hands and fingers can maintain a gentle curve. So put those little legs on the back of the keyboard **down** and prop up the front a few centimeters.
- (3) Keep your hands in a straight line with your arms - don't curve them in or out.
- (4) The top of the **monitor** screen should be at eye level.

**Adjust your workstation.** To achieve all this, you should be able to adjust - chair height, table height, monitor and keyboard placement



**Keep warm!** You may need to wear warm clothing even in summer. Fingerless gloves can help too.

**Build variety** into your day. Break up periods of computing with other activities.

**Take breaks** - use a timer or special software to make sure your fingers get a rest every 15 minutes or so. A lot of people find relaxation mini-breaks helpful and they won't be noticed by people around you: sit in your chair, hands in your lap and move your attention from your head to your neck, then to your shoulders, your elbows, your forearm and your wrists. As you do this, relax each part of your body in turn.

**Relax!** Stretch regularly and let your hands drop free. When you type use only as much effort as you need to. Hang your arms from your shoulders; keep your elbows loose. Don't hold your breath at the computer. Tension in one part of your body will lead to tension elsewhere, and consequent pain in your hands, wrists and arms.

**Don't put too much pressure** on the typing keys - hit the keys softly.

**Relax your arms while you compose!** Avoid holding your hands in the air whilst thinking of what to write. Put them in your lap.

**Manage stress.** Stress makes your muscles tighten and work harder. You can get injured much faster if you're stressed. So learn how to manage stress through relaxation classes, meditation, tapes or whatever suits you.



**Exercise** promotes good circulation and this is essential to RSI prevention. So, put more activity into your life. Move around as much as you can. Walk to school, use the stairs, play some sport at lunchtime, ride your bike.

**Warning Signs** Some of the most common early warning signs are:

- (a) Aching in the neck or shoulder blades while keying
- (b) Tightness and soreness in the forearms, tingling in the fingers
- (c) Muscle cramps in the neck, back, or shoulders while working and elbow discomfort, especially when keying and mousing

**'An ounce of prevention'** RSI is extremely difficult to cure and can prevent you doing all kinds of things - playing a musical instrument, driving, working, and playing sports. Some people with RSI eventually get a chronic pain syndrome that is very hard to cure. Early action is the key. If you get symptoms of RSI, see your doctor!