

Checklist for safer computing

This checklist can be used by both teachers and students to evaluate safer computing practices.

First, let's look at the workstation:

▪ Is the monitor slightly below eye-level?	
▪ Are the keyboard and mouse on the same level?	
▪ Is the mouse close to the side of the body, so it can be easily reached without extending the forearm sideways?	

Now look at posture:

▪ Is your head directly over your shoulders? (Ears in line with shoulders and not hunched over).	
▪ Is your back straight and lower back supported by the chair?	
▪ Are your thighs and arms parallel to the floor?	
▪ Are your shoulders and arms loose and relaxed?	
Is your head straight most of the time and not looking down at the keys? (Touch-typing skills are a big help here!)	

And what about technique?:

▪ Are your fingers resting on the mouse between the clicks? (Make sure the clicking finger it is not being raised between use).	
▪ Are your fingers relaxing into a rainbow down to the keys when typing? (No claws or spider legs!)	
▪ Elbows close to the side of the body, at just slightly more than a 90° angle?	
▪ Do you know to take regular breaks to stand and stretch?	
▪ You also need plenty of aerobic exercise -- it's highly protective against overuse injury.	
▪ Breathing from the abdomen can help too - not short chest breaths but belly breaths that get oxygen into the blood and out to muscles.	

And last but not least:

▪ Are you able to touch type? This can help prevent overuse injury.	
▪ Have you received training in the program you are using? This training will reduce the frustration of learning by trial and error.	
▪ Do you know the keyboard shortcuts? Using keyboard shortcuts will cut down mouse use and help prevent mouse injury.	