

WORKING WITH DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

Working with display screen equipment on a regular basis requires certain precautions to be taken for health protection. Using display screen equipment in the wrong way can endanger your eyes and eyesight, as well as causing problems to your posture and leading to physical or mental fatigue. It should be preliminarily pointed out that, so far, studies have ruled out the existence of specific risks from ionising and non-ionising radiation for both display screen equipment users and their children. The level of radiation is that normally present in common living environments where electrical appliances and TV equipment are used. Pregnancy-related postural variations may lead to lower-back issues. For this reason, more frequent breaks and shorter usage time are advised in pregnant women. Follow the instructions below to prevent the occurrence of health issues sometimes associated with display screen equipment usage.

Take breaks

Take a break or do something else for at least fifteen minutes every one hundred and twenty minutes spent using display screen equipment. This preventive measure allows you to rest your eyes and musculoskeletal system, as keeping a fixed posture for a long time may be detrimental.

Adjust your workstation

Your work surface should be:

- Wide enough to accommodate the material and equipment you need (screen, keyboard, etc.), as well as allowing your forearms to rest in front of you;
- Deep enough to ensure sufficient distance from the screen, keeping in mind that the larger the screen size, the farther away you should sit;
- Light-coloured, preferably not white and in any case non-reflective;
- Stable and with a fixed or adjustable height between approximately 70 and 80 cm;
- Equipped with enough room to comfortably accommodate and allow your lower limbs and chair to move.

Your chair should:

- Be of a swivel type, prevent slipping and tipping over, equipped with a stable or five-point base;
- Be equipped with an independently adjustable seat and backrest to ensure good foot and lower-back support;
- Have smooth edges and be made of a material that is permeable to water vapour, cleanable and not too soft;
- Be easy to move, also considering the type of floor;
- If necessary, be equipped with a separate footrest, to ensure an appropriate posture for your lower limbs.

Your work environment

- Noise should not disrupt attention and communication
- Air currents should be avoided. Air itself should not be too dry to avoid irritating your eyes. Attention must be paid to avoid placing your workstation near radiant heating sources – both heaters and windows exposed to direct sunlight
- In order to avoid reflection on the screen, glare and excessive brightness contrast, place your workstation perpendicular to windows. Artificial lighting must be provided by shaded fixtures with non-flickering bulbs located out of your field of vision; for unshielded ceiling fixtures, the line between your eyes and the lamp must form an angle of no less than 60° with the horizon.

Portable computers

Working on a portable computer for a long period of time is easier when you use an external keyboard and mouse or other pointing device, as well as appropriate support for your screen.

In order to avoid the occurrence of musculoskeletal disorders

- Maintain a correct posture in front of the screen – rest your feet on the floor and your lower back on the chair, adjusting the chair height and backrest tilt;
- Adjust the screen in front of you so that the upper edge is positioned slightly below the horizontal line between your eyes, at an eye-screen distance of approximately 50-70 cm;
- Place your keyboard in front of the screen, unless you are only using the latter occasionally, and your mouse or other frequently used devices on the same level as the keyboard, so that they are within reach;
- Avoid stiffness in your fingers and wrists when typing and using the mouse; rest your forearms on the work surface to relieve tension in your neck and shoulders;
- Avoid maintaining a fixed posture for a long time. If this is inevitable, do muscle relaxation exercises and stretch often (neck, back, upper and lower limbs).

In order to avoid the occurrence of visual problems

- Properly illuminate your workstation, possibly with natural light adjusted by means of curtains or blinds, or with artificial light. Greater visual comfort is achieved with just the right amount of lighting and by placing light sources out of your field of vision. Brightness must be similar to that of the objects and surfaces in the immediate vicinity, so as to avoid excessive contrast;
- Move and tilt the screen to eliminate reflections as much as possible;
- Maintain a correct posture so that your eye-screen distance is approximately 50-70 cm;
- If you are using a document holder, place it at the same height and distance from your eyes as the screen;
- From time to time, look at distant objects away from the screen to reduce eye fatigue;
- When you take a break or do something else, avoid visually intensive activities, such as correcting a written text;
- Regularly clean your keyboard, mouse and screen;
- Wear vision correction, if prescribed.