

Laboratory Ergonomics Self-Assessment Tool

Name	Job Title	Time on Job	Analysis Date	
Work Schedule:	Break schedule/ Breaks taken away from workstation/area?			
Time Spent/Day:	Outside hobbies/activities and approximate hrs/day:			
At Computer?	Describe unique aspects to your activities that may involve awkward postures, sustained repetitive motions, high force or pressure, or vibration.			
Reading?				
Seated?				
Standing?				
Lifting ?				
At microscope?				
Manipulating small tools?				
On Telephone?				
Driving?				
Other significant tasks?				
FEATURE		YES	NO	COMMENT
CHAIRS / STOOLS / STANDING STATIONS				
Backrest provides support to lower back?				
5-Caster base?				
Adjustable seat depth and height and angle?				
Chair fits in width and depth?				
Feet rest comfortably on floor or footrest?				
Thighs approximately parallel to floor?				
Rounded seat edge and adequate space behind knee?				
Armrests support forearms w/out lift or lean?				
Armrests don't interfere with close work?				
Armrests padded and contoured w/out hard edges?				
Is an anti-fatigue mat supplied at standing stations?				
Is bench height appropriate for the work performed?				
WORKSPACE				
Hands and wrists free from contact with desk edge?				
Workstation arranged according to usage?				
Adequate space for all equipment & tools in use?				
Adequate knee and leg space under work surface?				
Overhead space reach minimized?				
Workspace oriented for dominant hand?				
KEYBOARD & OTHER HAND ACTION				
Wrists are in a neutral posture?				
Forearms parallel to floor?				
Wrists supported during pauses?				
Wrist support padded, non-irritating?				
Upper arms and elbows close to body?				
Shoulders relaxed, arms in neutral position?				
FEATURE		YES	NO	COMMENT
Petri dishes, loop tool, and other regularly used tools arranged in half circle within reach of 12-14"?				
Electric and/or multichannel pipettes utilized?				
Alternate between thumb and index finger pipetting?				
Latch-mode pipettes provided?				

Fine detail work and highly repetitive work limited to 20 minutes then interrupt for at least 2 minutes?			
Small tools & instruments (razors, scalpels, tweezers) do not require tight pinch to control? Tool wrap, or other method to build up handles is available?			
MOUSE/TRACKBALL/TOUCH PAD			
Located directly adjacent to the keyboard?			
Same height as the keyboard?			
Moves freely and well maintained?			
Software customized? (speed, etc.)			
Loose grip used?			
MONITOR / VIEWING DEVICES			
Screen or device viewed without head tilt?			
View is directly ahead?			
Back is fully supported while viewing?			
Monitor distance allows comfortable reading?			
Monitor at <i>least</i> 18" from user?			
Does the monitor:			
*Have good contrast w/ crisp clear text?			
*Adequate brightness level?			
*Backgrounds free from flicker?			
Microscopes			
Individual trained to properly sit at a microscope ?			
View through eyepiece without head tilt?			
Chair adjusted to a slight forward tilt?			
Microscope brought forward for best positioning?			
Forearms & wrists are in neutral posture parallel to floor?			
Forearms and Wrists do not rest on hard edge?			
Upper arms and elbows close to body?			
Shoulders relaxed, arms in neutral position?			
Foot rest is provided?			
Microscope work breaks provided?			
OTHER EQUIPMENT			
Worker avoids awkward wrist positions when operating a microtome or cryostat?			
Workstation height allows neutral arm position?			
Access to an automatic microtome/cryostat?			
Vials with fewest threads allowable are used?			
Dissection or micro-manipulation with forceps less than 5 hours per week?			
Telephone not used cradled between ear and shoulder?			
10-Key allows neutral position while in use?			
Reference papers in easy sight line to monitor?			
LIFTING & CARRYING			
Frequently lifted items stored at knee to shoulder height?			
Items can be brought close before lifting?			
Lifting from floor level avoided?			
Storage of materials close to place of use?			
Mechanical devices (carts etc.) available and utilized?			
Co-workers team lifting heavy or awkward items?			
Employees are training in proper lifting techniques?			
Lifting is only one of a variety of tasks?			
Lifted objects are uniform in size and shape?			
Lifted object are of odd shape?			

ENVIRONMENT			
Monitors placed at 90° to bright light sources?			
Monitors between rows of overhead lights?			
Ambient light level similar to that emitted from screen?			
Evenly distributed lighting?			
Filing and copying areas well lit?			
Reflected glare minimized?			
Noise levels low enough to not disturb work?			
Position easily adjusted by employee?			
ORGANIZATION			
Repetitive tasks are rotated?			
Work week is 40 hrs or less?			
Task scheduling considers ergonomic risk factors?			
Staffing levels consider ergonomic risk factors?			
Employees control pacing of tasks?			
Workers have input regarding tasks?			
Automation utilized where feasible?			
Rest breaks away from detail-oriented tasks are utilized?			
Stretch and Flex movements are encouraged?			
Mini-breaks throughout the day are encouraged?			
Other			

Now that you have completed an initial ergonomic assessment, take time to examine any of the items you answered “NO” to on the assessment tool. Consider ways to adjust your workstation or your work practices to eliminate, reduce, or manage these areas that you identified as presenting less than ideal ergonomic conditions.

Prioritize those activities that you find bothersome, activities where you spend the most significant amount of time, and where changes can be made easily and quickly. Carefully consider the numerous options available for resolving issues if you think a change of equipment, tools, or furniture may be needed.

You or your department will be responsible for the costs associated with any purchases.