

Tailgate Talk

Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries

Don't Be Afraid of Your Computer Mouse

Many people who use a computer mouse (also known as a hand-held pointing device, or pointer) suffer from soreness in the hand, wrist, elbow, shoulder or neck. Frequent or prolonged use of the mouse and keyboard over time can cause musculoskeletal strain, and finding an effective solution can be difficult. However, most ergonomists agree that the design and position of the mouse and keyboard, the position of your body, and the way you use the mouse can play a major role regarding the potential risk of discomfort or injury.

MOUSE/POINTER QUICK TIPS

- Keep the mouse/pointer close to the keyboard.
- Alternate hands with which you operate the mouse/pointer.
- Use keyboard short cuts to reduce extended use.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Position the mouse/pointer to allow you to maintain a straight, neutral wrist posture. This may involve adjustments to your chair, desk, keyboard tray, etc.
- If the keyboard tray/surface is not large enough to accommodate both the keyboard and mouse, try one of the following to limit reaching:
 - Use a mouse platform positioned over the keyboard. This design allows the mouse to be used above the 10-key pad.
 - Install a mouse tray next to the keyboard tray.
- Use a keyboard that has a pointing device, such as a touchpad, incorporated into it.
- Use a keyboard without a 10-key pad, which leaves more room for the mouse/pointer.
- Install keyboard trays that are large enough to hold both the keyboard and mouse.
- Evaluate options to select the appropriate type/design of pointing device.
- Reduce the strain on hands by reducing mouse/pointer use. For example: use keyboard functions such as page down, or substitute keystrokes for mousing tasks, such as Ctrl+S to save and Ctrl+P to print.

Additional information is available online from a variety of resources regarding workplace ergonomics, including [OSHA's Computer Workstations eTool](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/components_pointers.html) at: https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/components_pointers.html.

Users of this Tailgate Talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.