

Safety Note #158

PROLONGED SITTING



Sitting for long periods of time may cause back pain and decreased blood flow to the lower extremities resulting in leg soreness, aches, and pain. Those that sit for prolonged periods of time also report higher occurrences of stiff necks and shoulders than those that perform tasks involving greater movement. This Safety Note presents information about how to reduce the potential for incurring back, neck, and leg discomfort or injuries due to prolonged sitting.

Recommended Prolonged Sitting Practices

- Always try to sit with your back straight and your shoulders back. Keep your tailbone snug against the back of your chair. Do not slouch in your chair.
- Keep your weight distributed evenly on both your hips.
- Avoid sitting with your legs crossed.
- Relax while sitting and working in a chair. Allow your neck, shoulder, and back muscles to release any muscle tension. Performing chair exercises may serve to relieve muscle tension.
- Bend your knees at a right angle and rest them at an elevation slightly higher than your hips. Keep your feet flat on the floor.
- Keep your chair height adjusted to your workstation height such that you are able to sit close to your work with your wrists and head in neutral positions.
- Change your sitting position frequently. Avoid sitting in the same position for more than 30 to 45 minutes.
- Periodically schedule work or other activities that force you to leave your chair and physically move to and from other locations.

Safety Note #28 provides additional information about sitting at computer workstations. See <http://safety.ucanr.org/files/1419.pdf>.

Safety videos and information that address computer workstations are available at the ANR Environmental Health & Safety website: http://safety.ucanr.org/Safety_Training_Resources/Ergonomic_Training/.