

## Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSI)

RSI is a condition that can affect muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints and nerves usually due to excessive or prolonged exposure to forceful, repetitive movements such as typing or gripping a mouse.

The cumulative effects of repetitive motions can, over time, result in injury of these tissues. RSI causes micro-damage and impedes the blood flow needed for healing.

Awkward and static positions such as slouching in a chair, elevating the shoulders, resting arms on the desk edge or planting wrists on the desk can also result in RSI.

### Symptoms may include:

- Pain
- Numbness and tingling
- Stiffness or cramping
- Loss of strength (inability to hold objects)

Symptoms can come and go and are often alleviated by making changes to your office equipment set-up and changing habits. If, however, symptoms increase in frequency and/or duration, they can be a sign of a more serious condition.

It is important to seek medical advice early as most symptoms are easier to treat in the early stages. Physiotherapists at our sister company, Physio at Work Ltd. are experienced in assessing and treating these conditions. [www.physioatwork.co.uk](http://www.physioatwork.co.uk)

Remember to change tasks, break, and stand up often.



Standing back bend

Forearm stretch

## Workstation Tips and Techniques

**Phone:** If on the phone frequently, use a headset to avoid straining neck.

**Monitor:** 60-70cm away, top of viewing screen at approximately eye level; centered; free of glare.

**Document Holder:** Place close to monitor at same height and angle if you are a touch typist, if not place between keyboard and monitor.

**Keyboard:** Place within easy reach directly in front of you.

**Mouse:** Ensure it fits your hand comfortably and is placed as close to the keyboard as possible. Propel the mouse with your shoulder, don't 'plant' your wrist.

**Chair:** Should have a 5-point base with castors, adjustable seatpan, back rest and arm rest height. Arm rests (if fitted) should be adjusted so that they do not interfere with typing or mouse use and do not hit the desk edge.

**Laptops:** Avoid using a laptop continuously for more than an hour, otherwise use an external mouse and keyboard with the laptop placed on a stand to raise the screen to eye level.



**Head:** Should look slightly down at the monitor.

**Shoulders/Arms:** Relax arms by your sides with elbows bent at 90°. Your forearms should be parallel to the floor.

**Wrists:** Keep straight and in-line with forearms. Do not bend wrists excessively up, down or sideways. Avoid resting forearms and wrists on desk when typing or mousing.

**Lower Back:** Support with chair's backrest to maintain lumbar curve. Ensure bottom is well back in chair.

**Hips & Knees:** Hips in line with or slightly above knees.

**Legs:** Supported with chair edge approx 5-8cm from back of knee.

**Feet:** Should be flat on the floor or a footrest (if feet do not comfortably reach the floor).

**Handheld devices:** Frequent repetitive use of BlackBerries, iPhones and mobiles can also contribute to symptoms. Try to keep use to a minimum and alternate between both hands.



Stretch gently to the point of resistance. Stop if painful.

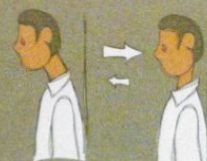


Shoulder stretch



Shoulder rotation

Hold for 5-10 seconds and repeat often throughout the day



Chin tuck



Back twist