

A NEW TWIST (OR LACK OF IT) FOR COMPUTER USERS AT NADEP JACKSONVILLE

Ergonomics, the practice of fitting the workstation to the worker to avoid muscle strain and discomfort, is an important part of occupational safety and health at Naval Aviation Depot (NADEP) Jacksonville. However, new, modular furniture does not guarantee freedom from discomfort unless ergonomic principles are considered. Here's yet another argument for investing the time to train workers to recognize the need for ergonomic improvements, and for verifying with workers whether the ergonomic interventions actually help them. The young man pictured at left had had his computer



station set up to accommodate a 13-inch monitor, but when it was replaced by a 19-inch monitor to assist with computer aided design, the worker did not have enough room on his desktop to line up the 19-inch monitor with his keyboard drop. For several months afterward, he was forced to turn his head to his left to see the monitor. When he began to feel neck pain and exhaustion at the end of his shift, he knew where to go for help.

Following a training session on Ergo Basics, he recognized his symptoms as the very thing the NADEP Ergonomics Team was interested in hearing about. He called the Safety Office to request an evaluation of his work site. An Ergonomics Team member trained in hazard recognition made the evaluation and also discovered that similar problems existed for others in the same work shop area who had all been provided with modular furniture but later received larger monitors that did not fit the narrow work surface.



The Ergo Team member recommended relocating the existing keyboard drops, which could be adjusted for height and angle and rotated. Another option for the shop was to provide more desktop space for drawings by adding a small corner (wedge) desk unit. Some selected the keyboard drop; others chose the corner desk. All were glad to get rid of their *pain in the neck* through the latest ergonomic improvements!

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