

Is This Your Office?

by Rick Boehm
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Many of today's superintendents work in offices with a computer terminal, often for long periods of time. If your computer station is poorly designed, it can be bad for your spine, legs, posture, and even your eyes and ears. Your computer station needs to be designed to fit you to avoid possible physical problems. How can this be done?

PLAN YOUR WORK AREA. Make your desk areas adjustable enough to accommodate the equipment you use on a daily basis and provide adequate surface space for writing. Work surfaces should not interfere with easy movements in your office. You need to be able to get up and move around, be able to get work material, or just to limber up.

There should be enough shelf space to store necessary equipment and accessories. Frequently used supplies should be in easy reach with heavier supplies stored on lower shelves to minimize back strain.

If you use a computer, the keyboard should be movable so your wrists can be placed in a natural position. I recommend a movable document holder which can be positioned upright for easier eye contact.

Ceiling lights should be positioned to the side rather than behind to avoid shadows, or directly overhead which could cause glare. A bright sunny window may need curtains if it causes glare on your screen. Remember, real bright light in your office can contribute to additional glare and eyestrain.

HEAT, OXYGEN, AND NOISE. Your computer produces enough heat to warm your office in the winter. My office is a cozy 78 degrees while I keep my thermostat on 45. So adequate ventilation is needed to keep your computer from building up too much heat. A window air conditioner in the summer will not only add to your comfort, but will keep your computer from overheating.

A noisy printer is very annoying while talking on the phone or to your assistant. You just can't turn it off, but you can minimize the sound by keeping all the covers on it designed to have or use your imagination to make a cover to muffle the noise.

WORK SURFACE DESIGN. You may have your computer surface high for standing or low for sitting, but either way, if it is the wrong height, physical problems could occur. A station too high will cause you to lift your shoulders leading to neck and shoulder cramps. A station too low can lead to back aches.

If you sit while you work at a computer, and most of us do sit, you must be able to keep your back in a natural posture while keeping your elbows at your body and your arms bent at right angles to your body.

A non-glossy monitor would cut down glare from windows or overhead lights and your computer desk should be large enough to move and cross your legs for a change of position. By keeping the clutter from building up under your desk, you ought to have enough room to stretch your legs to improve circulation.

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HOW ABOUT YOUR CHAIR. Did you know you put 30 percent more pressure on your spinal discs when you are sitting? So the type of chair you use is critical for both comfort and support. Your chair should fully adjust to height and tilt and be able to rotate in a complete circle. Chairs of this type help reduce muscle tension.

Your chair height should be adjusted so your feet can rest comfortably on the floor. A chair with rollers is preferable so you can move around the work area without having to stand up. A chair should be easily adjusted. There should be no need to call in your mechanic with his tool box or welder.

Office work does not have to be a strain on you. We have enough strains maintaining the golf course and dealing with the many day-to-day agonies. With careful planning you can design a comfortable and efficient work area.

Cougar Game Recap

On August 21, over 90 people enjoyed a family picnic and Kane County Cougar baseball game sponsored by the MAGCS. A wonderful picnic was prepared by the staff of the Kane County Cougars. Games for the kids followed the picnic. A special thanks goes to Cindy Cross, Peggy Czerkies, and Marilyn Taylow for arranging the games for more than 30 kids. Kerry Blatteau has volunteered to run the games next year.

The only casualty was to Ed Braunsky when he suffered a bloody nose after being hit in the face by a shaving cream laced sponge. Boy, Ed, that must have hurt.

There were 8,127 people at the baseball game. Out of all these people, Jim Reed was deemed, by the Cougars staff, to have the dirtiest car in the parking lot. He won a free car wash. Congratulations, Jim.

A good time was had by all even though the Cougars lost 2-0. Thanks to all who supported this event.

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