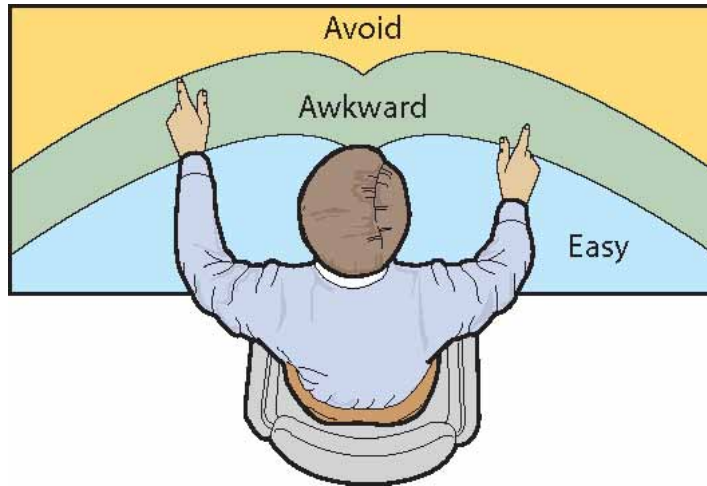


# Ergonomics Fact Sheet: Correcting Posture Problems

Standing, sitting, and moving incorrectly all increase your risk of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)—injuries often associated with repetitive strain or damage to muscles, tendons, nerves and joints.

Poor posture strains muscles and tendons and stresses joints. With a little adjustment, however, you can correct most posture problems. The key is to stay in or near what is called “**neutral position**” and keep work materials within easy reach.



## Neutral Position

Whether you are standing or sitting, neutral posture places the least amount of stress on your body. To find neutral, line up your ears, shoulders and hips in a straight line. Keep your head upright and relax while you do this. Don't hold your breath or hunch your shoulders. Your shoulders should be level, with your arms near your sides. You can rest your body by returning to the neutral position often.

## Work Within Reach

Get closer to your work. You use less force when doing tasks within easy reach. Keep your work within 14 to 18 inches of your body, depending on your size. Reaching too far can be awkward. It also reduces your leverage, so you need to use more force. Avoid locking a joint—extending it until it can go no further—when lifting items. Also, avoid reaching overhead or behind your back, if you can. If you must reach out, return to neutral as soon as possible.



Learn more with ***Ergonomics*** (Stock No. 656712), an American Red Cross Injury Control Guide. These affordable, reader-friendly guides help employers manage workplace injuries and health risks that cost businesses time and money. Other topics include *Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls*, *Preventing Back Injuries*, *Managing Stress*, *Workplace Violence Awareness* and *Your Heart Matters*.

For more information, contact your local American Red Cross chapter or visit [www.RedCross.org](http://www.RedCross.org) today.

