# What Causes Computer-related Pains?

By Dave Pfeil

Computers can be a gateway to where you want to go or a gateway to human pain.

An *ergonomically correct* workstation is critical to your long-term performance.

Workers performing at computers are typically: working in awkward and static postures, using forceful exertions, creating mechanical contact stressors, repeating motions, and not resting fatigued muscles. These physical stressors can lead to Musculo Skeletal Disorders.

Working in an **_awkward posture_** increases the amount of pressure needed to accomplish a muscle movement. Awkward postures create a condition where your muscles are being used inefficiently; therefore, your muscles must to work harder. For example, bending your wrists upward while keying.

**_Static postures_** occur when computer users are in a fixed posture (like a mannequin) over long periods of time. This posture requires a significant static holding force that causes fatigue creating muscle tension and tightening the muscles.

The average person uses 8 ounces of **_force_** to press a computer key. A person who types 60 words per minute can touch the keys 108,000 times in six hours. This keying adds up to 50,000 pounds pressed *through the fingertips* during one day of typing.

A **_hard or sharp surface_** *pressing* into soft tissues of the tendons, nerves or blood vessels can cause damage that over time can result in serious injury. An example of this is the resting of wrists on the desk edge while typing or using the mouse.

Performing **_repetitive motions_** can result in trauma to the joints and surrounding tissues. Without time for rest and recovery, these stressors can lead to injury. Computer users have a right to receive ergonomic training!

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