

Lead Story

Good posture important at home

The importance of good posture and the impact this has on your body is something that should not be ignored, especially now that the majority of us spend time at a computer. Perhaps you don't spend your time staring at a monitor and typing while at work, but chances are that once you are home, that's where you will be.

At work you may have a decent office chair to sit in and your monitor is positioned exactly right to avoid neck strain. When you are at home are you considering these things, or are you curled up on the couch with the laptop on your lap?

And it's not only computer use that is causing muscle strain. Time on tablets and smartphones are also taking their toll. Here are some facts:

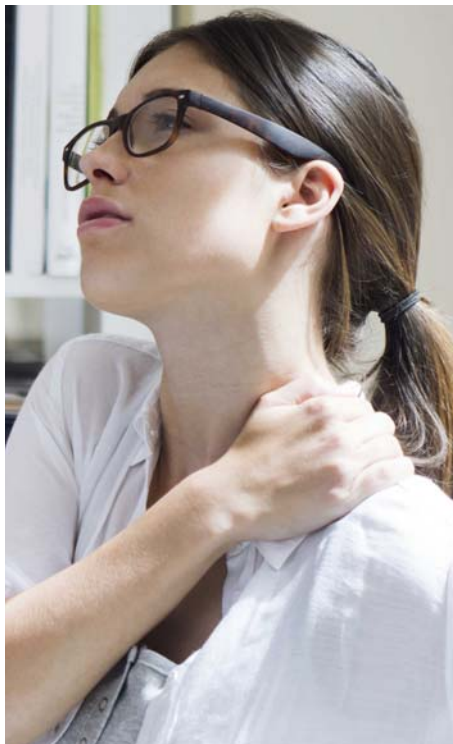
- Improper use of a tablet devices can lead to neck, back and wrist strain from just gripping your tablet for too long.

- Supporting the device in mid-air during long term use can cause shoulder and neck strain.

- Laying your device flat on your lap or a table top is also not recommended because it causes you to crane your neck downward eventually causing neck strain.

Some of the worst postures we assume while at a computer or using an electronic device tend to be at home. Correct posture is a simple but very important way to keep the many intricate structures in the back, neck and spine healthy.

We spend half of our day at our workplace and the next half of the day at home so why should our practice and application of ergonomics stop when we leave work? Perhaps it's time to consider your sofa or easy



chair to determine if they take the pressure off your back and hips.

According to ergonomics-info.com, it is important for the sofa not to be too low, causing your knees to bend less than 90 degrees. Subconsciously you'll sink in and stretch out your legs to maintain that 90 degree angle of your knees. If your sofa is too soft, you'll find yourself sinking in. This causes too much pressure on your hips.

This is not to say you can't relax how you would like to on your couch; you can lounge around and slouch - after all, that is a way of resting. Just remember slouching, slumping, and other poor postures puts extra pressure on the neck and back. In order to maintain a relaxed yet supported posture, change positions frequently.

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Ergonomics

M a k i n g H e a d l i n e s

Four biggest heart disease breakthroughs

(NC) Research advances over the past 60 years have saved countless lives from heart disease.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation spoke with 16 of Canada's top cardiovascular experts to identify their picks for the most important advances. Their choices make it clear that despite tremendous progress, even bigger research challenges lie ahead.

1. Identification of risk factors: In the 1950s doctors did not have a good grasp of what heart disease was, what caused it, or how to treat or prevent it. Now research has revealed the role of risk factors including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, being overweight or obese, being physically inactive and smoking. While there has been great progress helping Canadians control some risk factors, supporting them to make

healthier lifestyle choices will be one of the biggest challenges for future research.

2. Reducing smoking: The decrease in smoking rates in Canada has been dramatic, from about 50% in the 1950s to much less than half that today. This is thanks to hard-fought battles for public policies and programs that have restricted tobacco and shifted attitudes. However, 16% of adult Canadians still engage in a behaviour that is a leading cause of preventable disease, disability and death.

3. More and better drugs: The number of drugs available to manage risk factors and heart disease has exploded, from a scant few 50 years ago to 10 classes today, each numbering hundreds of drugs, including such biggies as:

- Beta blockers, which protect the heart from subsequent attacks

- ACE inhibitors, which help control blood pressure

- Statins, which are used to lower cholesterol and are effective at preventing cardiovascular disease as well as treating it.

Research continues to increase the effectiveness of drugs and reduce their side effects.

4. Better heart surgery: In 1954 the first open-heart surgery was performed in Canada. Today open-heart surgery has more and more been replaced by less invasive procedures such as angioplasty, in which a collapsed balloon is inserted via a needle into a narrowed artery and then inflated to open the artery. One result is greatly reduced complications and recovery times.

Tips for a healthy recovery after a heart attack

(NC) Thanks to research advances since the 1950s, many more people are surviving heart attacks – as many as 95 per cent of those who make it to hospital.

While that is great news, these survivors face challenges returning to good health and avoiding future episodes. For some this could mean quitting a two-pack-a-day smoking habit, plus taking medication to control high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

If you or someone you love has had a heart attack, there are steps you can take to make a fuller recovery, working closely with your doctor.

Start rehab: Cardiac rehabilitation programs have shown to help



survivors recover to the fullest. Talk to your doctor about how you can join a program near you.

Get active: After a heart attack, exercise is key to recovery. Regular physical activity improves cardiovascular health and can reduce your risk of a second heart attack.

Go smoke free: Within a year of quitting smoking, your added risk of heart disease will drop to half. Being

smoke free also reduces high blood pressure, the number one risk factor for stroke.

Eat well: Your body needs the right type of fuel to recover. Aim for between five and 10 servings of vegetables and fruit each day. Make at least half of your grains whole grains, and limit salt and sugar.

Ask for help: It's normal to feel different emotions when you return home. In some cases, cardiac events can trigger depression. If you're feeling overwhelmed, reach out for help. Recognizing the signs and starting treatment early can help speed up recovery.

More information is available online at heartandstroke.ca/heartdisease.

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M a k i n g H e a d l i n e s

Good posture important at home

Continued from page 1

Good posture and back support are critical to reducing back pain and neck pain. Back support is especially important for those who spend many hours sitting in an office chair or standing throughout the day.

Not maintaining good posture can add strain to muscles and put stress on the spine, according to spine-health.com. Over time, the stress of poor posture can change the spine itself, leading to the possibility of constricted blood vessels and nerves, as well as problems with muscles, discs, and joints.

All of these can be major contributors to back and neck pain, as well as headaches, and fatigue.

Here are some tips to help you maintain good posture while sitting in your office chair or in your easy chair at home:

- Keep your back straight, maintain all 3 natural curves in your spine.

- Distribute your weight evenly on both hips.

- Keep your head and neck aligned over your shoulders.

- Sit back in your chair; your back should be supported by the seat back.

- Avoid sitting for long periods of time; get up from your chair at least once every hour.

- Do not twist or bend your back from a seated position.

And remember, the way that a laptop computer is designed can increase the risk for strain on the head and neck, as well as the hand and wrists. This is a result of poor posture or awkward positioning of the body to accommodate the design of the computer. To avoid these issues, sit in a comfortable chair and place the laptop on a desk or table.

Consider getting a special holder for your tablet if you plan to spend a great deal of time on it, such as watching a movie or playing a game.

Get the skinny on household workouts

(NC) If your resolution to get fit this year is not yet on the road to success, real hope is on the horizon. Don't worry, the vigorous workouts you're going to get from spring cleaning will more than make up for it.

Did you know that cleaning can expend the same amount of calories as doing lunges or light calisthenics? I bet that will get you to #rethinkcleaning!

Excited to get started? Here's a list of common household cleaning tasks and the calories they burn:

- **Mopping:** 15 minutes will burn 43 calories, and one hour use up 170 calories.

- **Sweeping Floors:** 15 minutes will burn 39 calories, and one hour will burn 156.

- **Vacuuming:** 15 minutes will burn 43 calories, and one hour will



have you burning 170.

- **Window Washing:** 15 minutes will burn 34 calories, and one hour will use up 136.

- **Carpet Cleaning:** 15 minutes will burn 39 calories, and one hour will burn 156 calories.

Be sure to crank up the tunes to intensify your workout routine and maximize your results. Not only will you have fun, you'll have a spotless home in no time. You can't get that at the gym.



A fire in your dryer is more common than you think

(NC) Did you know that laundry room clothes dryers are the cause of around 15,000 house fires across North America every year? It is essential, therefore, to put this hard-working appliance on your springtime to-do list. Dryer fires are fairly preventable with proper maintenance and safety precautions.

Most people know you should clean the lint trap after every dryer use and shouldn't overload your machine. However, here are six other tips you can follow to ensure it is operating safely:

1. Don't leave your dryer running if you're not at home.
2. Make sure there's proper ventilation for dryers located in closets or enclosed rooms.
3. Never operate your dryer with a damaged or missing lint filter.
4. Keep the area around the dryer free of combustible items.
5. Never dry fabrics that have been saturated by oils, gasoline or chemicals. And don't put rubber coated or foam items in your dryer either.
6. Always refer to the owner's manual for proper operating instructions.

And once a year be sure to:

- Check that the dryer duct is clear of lint and connected to a vent outdoors. This can also help to reduce energy costs.

- Replace plastic venting pipes with flexible aluminum or steel material to sustain proper airflow and avoid crimping.



Low rolling resistance tires equals fuel savings

(NC) Many of us have experienced the effect of rolling resistance (RR) when riding a bicycle with underinflated knobby tires, in contrast to smooth-tread tires inflated to a higher pressure. A cyclist expends less effort when using smooth road tires.

The effect of RR is similar in our vehicles, except that we never really notice it as much since the engine is doing the work.

Did you know that rolling resistance from tires accounts for about 4 to 7 per cent of your vehicle's fuel consumption? In fact, auto manufacturers commonly install low rolling resistance tires as original equipment on new vehicles to help improve efficiency.

Most tire manufacturers are also offering low rolling resistance (LRR) replacement tires, which can reduce the overall fuel consumption of your vehicle by about 1 to 4 per cent, compared to conventional replacement tires.

LRR tires are designed to improve vehicle fuel efficiency without compromising safety – and tire designers use innovative materials, construction methods and tread patterns to reduce the amount of RR and in turn, the amount of fuel consumed.

Ask your local tire retailer about LRR tires and look for cost estimation tools online. Several tire manufacturers and retailers provide online calculators to help drivers make informed tire choices. Look for calculators that provide comparisons of tread life durability, wet traction safety, rolling resistance and total cost of ownership.

There is more information about fuel efficiency on the Natural Resources Canada website at www.vehicles.nrcan.gc.ca.

Working Safely

Sleep apnea could put you at risk

By BRYDEN WINSBY
FOR COMFORT ZONE

Snoring can be much more than an annoyance to people in the immediate vicinity. It can indicate a potentially life-threatening disorder called sleep apnea.

Many people don't think of snoring as a sign of something serious, and not everyone who snores has sleep apnea, but there's cause for concern if the snoring is loud, and especially if it is punctuated by periods of silence.

There are three types of sleep apnea: obstructive, central and mixed. The most common is obstructive sleep apnea, which occurs when the throat muscles intermittently relax and block a person's airway during sleep. Pauses in breathing can last from 10 to 30 seconds and occur up to 400 times per night. Every time breathing stops, the level of oxygen in the blood falls and the heart must pump harder. With each obstruction, the person must awaken momentarily to resume breathing and this results in a disjointed, poor-quality sleep.

With central sleep apnea, the brain actually fails to signal the muscles to breathe. The airway is clear, but the diaphragm and chest muscles stop working. Eventually the decreased level of oxygen in the blood signals the brain to awaken the sleeper to restart breathing. Mixed sleep apnea is a combination of central and obstructive sleep apnea. It often begins as central sleep apnea and develops into the obstructive form.

Daytime sleepiness, the most common symptom of sleep apnea, affects a person's ability to function effectively. Untreated, it also poses several risks to one's health and safety, and that of others.

Signs and symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea also include:

- Abrupt awakenings accompanied by shortness of breath.
- Awakening with a dry mouth or sore throat.
- Awakening with chest pain.
- Morning headache.
- Difficulty concentrating during the

day.

- Experiencing mood changes, such as depression or irritability.

- Difficulty staying asleep (insomnia).

Sleep apnea can affect anyone at any age, even children, but these are some of the major risk factors:

- Being male.
- Being overweight.
- Being over age 40.
- Having a large neck size.
- Having large tonsils, a large tongue or a small jawbone.
- Having a family history of sleep apnea.
- Gastroesophageal reflux, or GERD.
- Nasal obstruction due to a deviated septum, allergies, or sinus problems.

Sufferers of sleep apnea can experience health problems such as high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, irregular heart rhythms, eye conditions and mood disorders.

They are also at increased risk of a fatigue-related motor vehicle crash or other accident. Studies have found that those with moderate or severe cases are seven times more likely to have traffic collisions or work-related accidents because of daytime sleepiness.

Although the symptoms of sleep apnea could be related to other health issues, having two or more of them can justify a visit to your doctor.

The three main levels of treatment for sleep apnea are:

- Dental appliances that keep the airway open.

- Continuous positive airways pressure (CPAP) therapy in which the patient wears a mask with tubing connected to a device that gently blows air through the airway at a pressure high enough to keep the throat open.

- Corrective surgery that opens the airway enough to eliminate or reduce obstructions, and may involve reconstruction of the uvula, palate or jaw.

While waiting for diagnosis and possible treatment, you could ease the condition by trying to sleep on your side, which makes most forms of sleep apnea milder.

Working Safely

Be wary of cross-contamination

By **BRYDEN WINSBY**
FOR COMFORT ZONE

Cross-contamination is a problem commonly associated with food preparation, laboratory or health care facilities, but it can occur in any workplace when biological, chemical or other contaminants are transferred from one surface to another.

When harmful germs are transferred to food, illness can occur.

Similarly, allergen-free products can be cross-contaminated by products containing allergens and cause allergic reactions in those who consume them.

In a manufacturing or industrial setting, workers who handle harmful substances should be aware that the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, safety glasses, respirators, coveralls and boots can reduce or eliminate their exposures. However, if they do not properly wash, remove or decontaminate soiled PPE and skin after leaving the work area, they can spread contaminants to coworkers and to their own families.

Non-food contaminants of concern include chemicals such as solvents, herbicides and pesticides, as well as materials such as lead, asbestos and fiberglass.

Those who work outdoors should be aware that they can contact and spread irritating oils from plants such as

poison ivy and poison oak.

Infected blood and other body fluids pose a bloodborne pathogen hazard. Certain viruses can live for days outside the body and still cause infection. Basic practices that can reduce chance of being exposed through cross-contamination include:

- Disinfecting surfaces that might have been in contact with blood or other body fluids.

- Changing gloves after having contact with a patient or accident victim.

- Not touching personal items, such as a pen or notepad, when wearing gloves that could be contaminated.

Cross-contamination is one of the most common causes of foodborne illness. There are many practices employees can follow to minimize or eliminate cross contamination, whether as part of a job in the food service industry or in the company lunchroom. Among them:

- Wash hands properly, frequently and at appropriate times.

- Wash hands before putting on single-use gloves and change gloves frequently.

- Wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.

- Cover cuts, sores, and wounds.

- Keep fingernails short, unpolished, and clean.

- Do not work if you are sick.

- Separate raw animal foods from ready-to-eat foods during receiving, storage and preparation.

- Separate different types of raw animal foods, such as eggs, fish, meat and poultry, from each other, except when combined in recipes.

- Separate unwashed fruits and vegetables from washed fruits and vegetables and other ready-to-eat foods.

- Place food in covered containers or packages, except during cooling. Store in the refrigerator or cooler.

- Store chemicals away from food.

- Use only dry, cleaned, and sanitized equipment and utensils for food preparation.

- Clean and sanitize work tables, equipment, and cutting boards after each use and before beginning a new task. For example, after slicing ham, the slicer should be cleaned and sanitized before slicing turkey.

- Clean and sanitize surfaces that are handled often, such as refrigerator and freezer handles.

- Maintain a fresh bucket of cleaning solution and a fresh bucket of sanitizing solution in the work area so that cleaning and sanitizing can be done easily. Check the concentration of the sanitizing solution to make sure it is at appropriate levels to sanitize.

What does a messy workspace actually mean?

A dirty desk isn't necessarily a bad thing. Depending on your own personal comfort, researchers found that keeping your desk messy or tidy may simply reflect a difference in personality.

Messy desks and creativity

The study found messy-desk people were more likely to break free of tradition. They tend to produce new or fresh ideas, and be more creative.

Neat desks and doing right

On the flip-side, people who kept their desks clean were more likely to "do the right thing." This might mean making a charitable donation or eating a healthy diet, researchers found. The study was published in the journal *Psychological Science*.

A clean desk may also reduce tension for some people because they may not like staring at all of the work that still needs to be done.

Work space on display

Try to avoid judging someone's workspace, especially if it looks disorganized. In the end, messy or clean, it comes down to what makes people most productive.

What matters: productivity

Consider your own productivity. If you work best when you focus on your projects without a care for stacks of file folders around you, so be it. But if you are most productive when your desk is cleared off to the essentials, keep that mess out of site.

- With files from Health Hub

Health & Safety Roundup

I Learned The Hard Way

contest entry

Tumble from ladder leaves important scar

Many, many years ago I worked in the retail industry. I was young, just new to earning a pay cheque and inexperienced in knowing my rights as an employee - my right to refuse unsafe work.

One afternoon my manager asked me to change the florescent bulbs in the back room of our store. The ceiling was quite high, and I did not feel comfortable getting on a ladder and changing bulbs. But, I guess I had "Super Woman" syndrome that day, and not wanting to disappoint my boss, I reluctantly went to the back room, found the large step ladder and the box of florescent bulbs. In order to reach, I had to stand on the top step of the ladder. So, there I was with both hands raised above my head, changing this light bulb.

Things were going well, and I was almost done when I began to lose my balance. I ended up falling onto some racking and tumbling down to the floor. I was lucky to only suffer a cut to my hand. I laid on the floor for what felt like an hour, scared to move anything, until one of my co-workers found me and helped uncover me from the clothing and ladder which had fallen on top of me.

What I learned the hard way... - Looking back, I think of what a foolish young girl I was. I wish that I knew then what I know now. I have the Right to Refuse any unsafe work without fear of being reprimanded or fired for that refusal. I also would have known that in the case of an accident, my manager should have reported my injury to WCB. I learned the hard way that it is my responsibility to work safely, and it's my employers' responsibility to ensure my safety in the workplace. Years later, now working in the Human Resources field, I still remember this hard lesson. I try to instill the importance of our health and safety rights during each and every new hire orientation. We all have rights, and it is my goal that all staff feel safe and are kept safe!

- Jennifer

This is one of the entries from the Comfort Zone's 'I Learned The Hard Way' contest. We thank all of our readers who participated in our contest.



Are you ready for a water emergency?

(NC) As we inch closer to spring, it's time to give some thought to the upcoming thaw and how it might affect your home and property. Recently, the Insurance Board of Canada stated that flooding and other emergency water events are now more common than fire across the country. Would you be ready if your home was flooded by a major water emergency? Even if you live on the top of a hill, you can still be affected by flooding due to old infrastructure or weather events.

Sewer backups and other plumbing issues may occur at any time because of:

- Heavy rain in a short period of time.
- A snap thaw or a seasonal snow melt after a particularly snowy winter.
- An increase in the water table after a prolonged wet period.

Some of these events might inconvenience you for a couple of hours, while others could keep you out of your home for several days or weeks. So in case you're affected, it's important to have a plan in place because the first three days after an emergency are the most critical. It should define each family member's role, include instructions for a meeting location and contain a list of emergency contacts. Also have a 72-hour emergency kit ready to go. Typically it will include three days

worth of water for each person in your family, imperishable food stuffs, candles, flashlight and batteries, and a first-aid kit.

Secondly, while you can't predict when you could be affected by a flood, you can prevent plumbing-related water damage through regular household maintenance:

- Make sure that everyone in your family knows how to find and shut off the water valves for the different parts of your home. In case of an emergency, they should know how to turn off the water main, water heater, washing machine, dishwasher, sinks and toilets. This should also be done before you go on vacation to prevent any unexpected water damage that may occur in your absence.
- Be aware of leaks in faucets, pipes and hoses. Sometimes a leak is a sign of a larger problem. Aim to fix any issues right away. Make sure you check the condition of your home's water tank for example, which should be replaced every seven to 10 years, depending on the water hardness.

■ In the spring make sure your roof is in good condition and that there is no cracking around your foundation. These are key areas where water can get in and cause a lot of damage. In the fall, remove leaves and debris from your gutters and downspouts.

Your Healthy Lifestyle

Wellness ZONE

Tips for staying on your treadmill safely

Getting into shape can mean more than getting off the couch and walking around the block. Some of us have taken this first step, and realizing how much better we feel, want to make our exercise routine a little more challenging. This could mean visiting a gym twice a week to get a solid workout, or even investing in some home gym equipment. Whatever the reason, it is likely you will encounter that standard exercise staple; the treadmill.

Spine-health.com tells us that the treadmill provides a straightforward, efficient aerobic workout. They are a good choice to begin a new exercise routine because walking is well tolerated by most individuals regardless of fitness level and for most back conditions. As strength and endurance are developed, the treadmill can be used for jogging and/or for interval training.

But like any piece of equipment we start using, there are a few things we should consider to make sure we are using the treadmill properly and safely. Here are some tips from prevention.com:

- Consider the type of shoes you are wearing. Look for shoes with extra padding in the soles to protect your heels and foot bones from the high impact of each foot strike.

- Watch out for a flat-footed landing. Landing flat-footed can cause muscle strain. Be as vertical as you can and walk or run as you would normally. Land on your midfoot or the ball of your foot—not your heel.

- Keep your arms by your sides until you get to higher speeds. Swinging your arms by winging them out to the sides or criss-



crossing them in front of you as you walk is not efficient. When your pace is increased to jogging speed, keep arms bent parallel to each other and at 90-degrees. Keep them loose, not tight.

- Avoid holding the bars of the treadmill after you are comfortable with how it feels and works. Walk naturally on the incline as you would normally walk up a hill outdoors. Don't watch your feet. Looking at your feet while walking on the treadmill can cause you to lose your balance.

- Get familiar with the treadmill's control panel. Ask for some basic instruction from a trainer at your gym, or read the instructions on the machine console before you turn it on.

- Know the safety features. Learn where the emergency off switch is and test it.

Be honest with young people about drinking

From the hormones to the fear of not fitting in, many obstacles can be found on the road to adulthood. For girls, maturing early seems to carry more substantial costs.

These girls often report feeling awkward around their peers, tend to hang out with an older crowd, and pressure to be part of that group may lead your young pubescent to experiment with things that she may not be ready for.

According to helpguide.org, in past generations, boys were much more likely than girls to experiment with alcohol in their

teens, but girls are catching up. In an earlier study, in the youngest group, (ages 12 to 17), the percentage of current drinkers was nearly the same (15% of boys, 14% of girls).

Here are a few reasons to keep the lines of communication open with your teen:

- Alcohol has harmful effects on developing brains and bodies.

- For adolescents ages 15 to 20, alcohol is implicated in more than a third of driver fatalities resulting from automobile accidents and about two-fifths of drownings.

- Underage drinking is illegal.

Take care of your selfie

"Selfies" are the craze of the social media era, but just how crazy will people get to obtain that photo? Here are a few examples of how far some people have gone:

- A woman while documenting her commute by posting selfies online, crossed into the opposite lanes on the freeway and hit a truck.

- While attending a bull run in Bayonne, France, a man decided to run in front to get a photo with the bulls. He was trampled.

Such examples are proof that more attention needs to be paid when taking a selfie. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Taking selfies while you are driving is more dangerous than texting. The best place for your cell phone while you are driving is out of reach to avoid temptation.

- Winning the prize for taking the most dangerous selfie "ever" is not worth your life. Do not step over safety railings or other barriers. For example, rocks and other footings near a waterfall or rushing river can be extremely slippery. There are barriers for a reason.

- If you are attending a sporting event, watch the event. Trying to take a selfie while athletes are running, cycling or driving behind you puts, not only yourself, but the athletes in danger.

Another aspect of the selfie and posting online is your security. Here are some things to consider:

- Avoid revealing personal and employment information. In one single photo you could be sharing the faces, names and place of work of all of your colleagues. Try to take photos that cut off at the shoulders so name badges aren't shown, and don't mention exactly where you work.

- By taking selfies constantly in a particularly well-known location and posting them to social media, you're telling people where you hang out regularly.

- Make your selfies facial recognition proof. When you take a selfie, avoid taking photos that look similar to a passport photo. These could be used with facial scanning software to steal your identity. When you take a selfie, move the camera to a slight angle, either taking it from above your face or from a side angle.

Your Healthy Lifestyle

Wellness ZONE

Blue light may be keeping you awake

Light at night is part of the reason many people don't get enough sleep. Many reports and studies confirm this statement and why wouldn't they? It makes sense. Artificial light allows us to continue to work, play and be active at night. The last thing it is supposed to do is make us feel sleepy.

But lack of sleep can lead to a series of health problems. According to harvardhealth.eu., exposure to light suppresses the secretion of melatonin, a hormone that influences circadian rhythms. Lack of sleep has been linked to increased risk for depression as well as diabetes and cardiovascular problems.

Today there is a greater risk to artificial light exposure with the increased use of LED lighting, especially blue light used in electronic devices. Blue wavelengths seem to be the most disruptive at night.

This means television screens, tablets, smartphones, and even a bedside digital clock with the blue LED time display could be disrupting your sleep patterns. There is, of course an upside to blue LEDs, besides their positive impact on the environment. A new study further examines the stimulating effects of blue wavelength light, focusing on the effects of daytime exposure to the short-wavelength light interfering with sleep.

Researchers at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital and Philadelphia's Thomas Jefferson University confirm that blue light stimulates alertness and diminishes feelings of drowsiness. This means that exposure to blue light during the day may offer a more welcome boost to alertness and reduction to fatigue, which could benefit both daytime function and night time rest.

If you find you are having more and more trouble feeling sleepy or falling asleep at night, consider the following:

- Use dim red lights for night lights. Red light has the least power to shift circadian rhythm and suppress melatonin.
- Avoid looking at bright screens beginning two to three hours before bed.
- Expose yourself to lots of bright light during the day, which will boost your ability to sleep at night, as well as your mood and alertness during daylight.

Ways to maintain your toothbrush

A visit to the dentist is always a reminder of how important it is to keep our teeth and gums healthy. We think about brushing our teeth several times a day, flossing after meals and using a mouthwash if necessary. But how often do we think about the toothbrush we use to keep our teeth brushed and buffed?

Not enough, according to WebMD.

Viruses and bacteria from an infected person's mouth can live for weeks on a toothbrush, continuing to cause illness. Even normal, healthy microorganisms can cause infections, especially if they enter your gum tissue due to an injury, a break, or an oral ulcer.

Here are a few things to consider to keep your toothbrush safe and sanitary:

- Give your toothbrush a thorough rinse with tap water to remove debris. If you have been sick recently or live with a chronic illness you may even want to consider running your toothbrush through a dishwasher.
- Store your toothbrush upright in a rack or cup where it can dry out. A lack of air can promote bacteria, so avoid placing a wet



toothbrush into a drawer or medicine cabinet.

- Replace your toothbrush about every three to four months, or when it shows signs of wear and throw away a brush you or anyone in your home used while sick. These rules also apply to the brush attachment from electric or power toothbrushes.

And remember never to share your toothbrush. Toothbrush sharing can transfer saliva and bacteria - even the kind that cause tooth decay.

Let the pomegranate become your comfort fruit

Apples, oranges, bananas and kiwis seem to be the staple fruits we find in most fridges. It is "comfort" fruit we are familiar with. We know what they taste like and, unless they are not under ripe or too ripe, we usually don't get any surprises when we bite into them.

Perhaps it's time to add another comfort fruit to this list; the pomegranate.

Nutrition-and-you.com describes the pomegranate as one of the most popular, nutritionally rich fruits with unique flavor and taste. The fruit is moderate in calories; 100 g provides 83 calories, slightly more than that in apples. It contains no cholesterol or saturated fats. It is a good source of soluble and insoluble dietary fibers. It is also a good source of vitamin-C and many vital B-complex groups of vitamins such as pantothenic acid (vitamin B-5), folates, pyridoxine and vitamin K, and minerals like calcium, copper, potassium, and

manganese. Some people may use pomegranate for medical reasons. WebMD reminds us that while pomegranate is used for many conditions, so far, there isn't enough scientific evidence to rate pomegranate as effective for any of them. It is known that pomegranate does not seem to be effective for reducing the symptoms of chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD) or improving breathing in people with this condition.

Curious about the taste of pomegranate? The best way to find this out is to eat one. Here's how:

1. Cut off the crown, then cut the pomegranate into sections.
2. Place the sections in a bowl of water, then roll out the juice sacs with your fingers. Discard everything else.
3. Strain out the water, then eat the succulent juice sacs whole, seeds and all.

The material contained in this document has been prepared from sources believed to be accurate and reliable. Application of this information to a specific worksite should be reviewed by a safety professional. Anyone making use of the information set forth herein does so at his/her own risk and assumes any and all liability arising therefrom. Specific medical advice should be obtained through consultation with a physician or other trained health care practitioner. Thanks to News Canada for some content and images.

Comfort **ZONE**

SAFETY MEETING

Read this part of the meeting aloud

Ergonomics ensures health and well being

Today's safety meeting is about ergonomics.

Working every day behind a desk can be a tiring and painful experience if you are not comfortable. Ergonomics, which is the study of work, how work is done and how to work better, helps us maintain a personal level of comfort.

Ergonomics focuses on the work environment and items such as the design and function of workstations, controls, displays, safety devices, tools and lighting to fit your physical requirements, capabilities and limitations to ensure your health and well-being.

Ergonomic hazards refer to workplace conditions that pose the risk of injury to the musculoskeletal system of the worker. Examples of musculoskeletal injuries include carpal tunnel syndrome, a condition affecting the hand and wrist.

Ergonomic hazards include repetitive movements, and awkward postures that come from improper work methods and improperly designed workstations, tools, and equipment.

It may only take a couple of adjustments to your chair, or your keyboard, or maybe the height of your desk to achieve the comfort you need. Perhaps you just need to stand up and move around more often to make sure your back and shoulders don't start aching.

While it is important to report issues about your workstation to your supervisor so he or she can help you, here are a few adjustments you can consider to improve your comfort level:

- Maintain good posture when working at the keyboard. Utilize a chair with back support.
- Keep your feet supported on the floor or on a footrest when you work to reduce pressure on your lower back
- Avoid twisting or bending your trunk or neck.

- Frequently used items should be positioned directly in front of you.
- Keep your shoulders relaxed with your elbows close to your sides.
- Position the monitor so that the viewed part of the screen allows you to keep your neck in a neutral or straight position. The monitor should be centred directly in front of you. The top of the computer screen should be slightly below the top of your head, so that you are looking at it with a slightly downward gaze.

■ Position your monitor to eliminate excessive glare or reflections from windows and lighting.

Interspersing short movements and exercises throughout the workday can also boost your energy and efficiency. Whether it's stretching periodically in your cubicle or office, or walking to a co-worker's desk rather than sending an email, small actions can go a long way toward improving how you feel during the day and when you go home at night.

Here are some tips on how to incorporate movement into your workday:

- Take the stairs.
- Hold "walking meetings," taking notes on the go if needed.
- Talk to colleagues in person rather than sending emails.
- Walk to a farther bathroom.
- Stand up periodically.
- Try small stretches or exercises.

Your hand out includes several exercises for you to try at work or at home.

Thanks for your attention today.

Comfort **ZONE**

Distribute to meeting attendees

SAFETY MEETING

Keep this handout for handy reference.

Ergonomics ensures health and well being

Sitting all day increases our risk for obesity and puts us at risk for back pain, poor posture, leg cramps, and tense muscles.

Here are several exercises you can do at your desk to help you and your body feel better.

Reminders:

- During the exercises, breathe normally.
- Do not overstretch – if you feel tightness or pain, stop immediately.
- As with all exercise, if you are not sure what to do or feel unwell, talk with a professional.

Wrist flex

Hold your hands out straight in front of you. Keeping your forearms straight, tilt your wrists back so your palms are facing forwards. Hold this position for 5 seconds and then return to the start position. Repeat 3 times.



Shoulder flex

Sit normally in your chair and relax your shoulders. Pull your shoulders up as high as you can, taking care not to arch your back. Hold this position for 5 seconds, then relax your shoulders. Repeat 2 times.



Forward stretches

Stand straight up. Interlock your fingers in front of your chest, with your palms facing away from you. Keeping your fingers locked, push your hands diagonally forwards and above you to straighten your arms. Hold this pose for 10 seconds.



Head drops

Sit up straight in your chair, relax and look straight ahead. Keeping your shoulder straight, tilt your head forwards and look down at the floor in front of you. Do not arch your back. Hold this position for 5 seconds, then return your head so you are looking straight ahead of you.



Comfort **ZONE**

Attendance sheet & quiz

SAFETY MEETING

Ergonomics ensures health and well being

Meeting date: _____

Meeting leader: _____

Meeting Quiz:

1. Ergonomics is the study of work, how work is done and how to work better.
True
False
2. Sitting for long periods of time behind your desk without moving does not harm you.
True
False
3. Neck strain can happen if you are seated too far away from your monitor and you have to lean forward to see your work.
True
False
4. Getting up and moving around during the day is a smart idea to boost your energy and efficiency.
True
False
5. Looking away from the monitor to refocus on something else throughout the day is a good way to help prevent eye strain.
True
False
6. An example of a musculoskeletal injury is carpal tunnel syndrome.
True
False

Have meeting attendees sign below:

Answers to safety	3. True
meeting quiz:	4. True
	5. True
	6. True
	1. True
	2. False