

A guide to computer keyboard ergonomics

Everything you need to know about keeping yourself comfortable and pain-free while you type at your computer.



When should you consider an ergonomic keyboard?



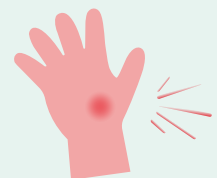
1

The device you mainly use is a laptop



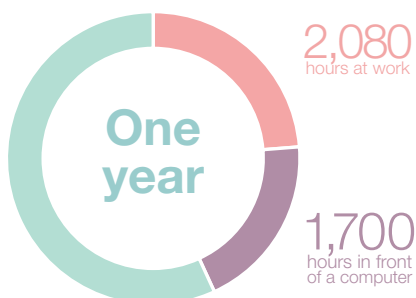
2

You use your keyboard a lot of the time



3

You experience pain in your fingers, hands, wrists, arms, or shoulders



In **one year**, it is estimated that an office worker spends **2,080** hours at work and **1,700** hours in front of a computer.

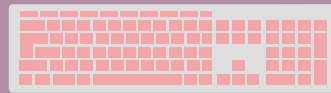
Ergonomic keyboard design features

Ergonomic design pays special attention to the user, taking into account factors like:



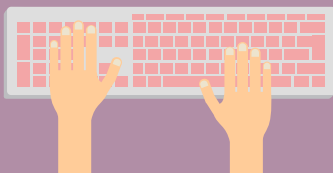
Your size

A keyboard that is too big or small can force the hands, arms and shoulders into uncomfortable positions, resulting in unnecessary strain and eventual injuries.



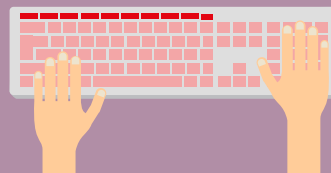
Work environment

How much space do you have on your desk? A large keyboard can create cramped, awkward positions. Wireless versions can save space and help create an uncluttered environment.



Dominant hand

This can determine where the most important keys are placed. On left-handed keyboards, the number pad is placed on the left side, alternatively use a separate number pad.



Productivity

Hotkeys and media keys can be used to make certain functions faster and easier to access, reducing the amount of hand movement needed.



Personal preference

There are a variety of key types available that vary in height, size, mechanism and tactile feedback. Everyone has their own preferred style.



Particular needs

Large, spaced, high contrast buttons can help people with vision problems, physical or learning difficulties.

Types of ergonomic keyboard

Full-size keyboard



A traditional style keyboard with integrated number pad designed to improve user experience and increase productivity.

Mini keyboard/compact keyboard



Rearranged into a smaller body designed to reduce the space between the keyboard and mouse to minimise stretching and reaching.

Split keyboard



Actively change the position of your hands for more comfortable typing. There are a variety of different shapes to suit different people.

Speciality keyboard



Designed for specific users or environments. Some keyboards feature high contrast or large font for those with vision problems, while others are made with medical grade materials designed for hygienic lab/clinical environments.

Wired



A keyboard that plugs in with a USB wire.

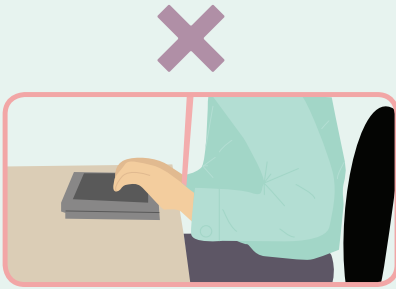
Wireless



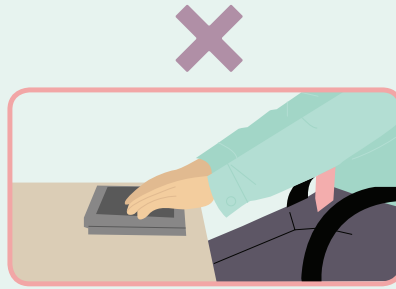
A keyboard that connects via Bluetooth or wireless USB receiver.

Keyboard positioning

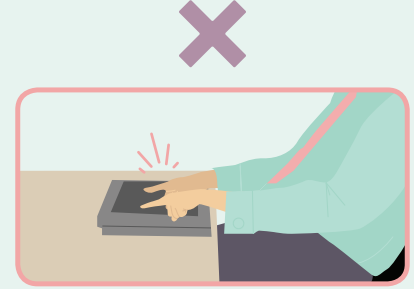
Avoid these postures



Bending hands up at the wrist, usually due to sitting too low



Overstretching the fingers, usually due to sitting too high



Hitting the keys too hard

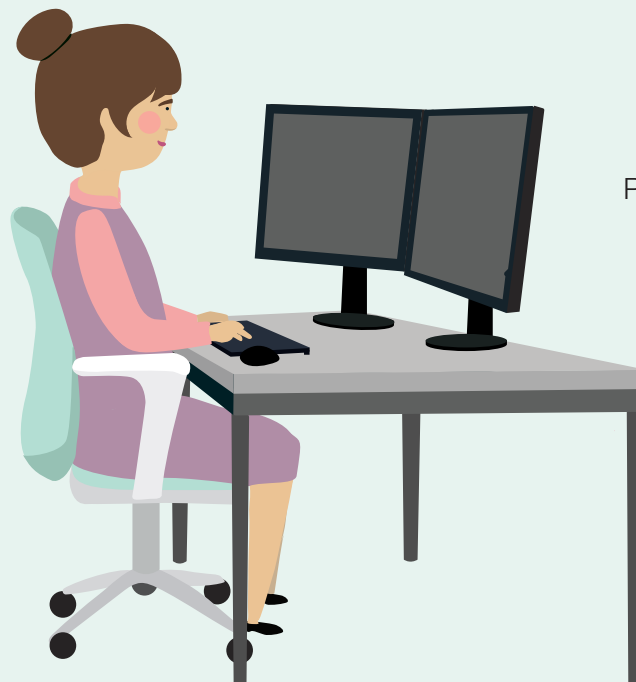
All of these can be avoided with a correct keyboard set-up.

How to position yourself at your keyboard

Your shoulders should be relaxed

Position your keyboard directly in front of you

Consider using a separate or slide-away number pad and hide away when not in use



Place close to you when you're sitting back in your chair

Have it at elbow height so your forearms are perpendicular to the desk

No matter how good your set-up is, remember to take regular microbreaks, frequently take your hands off the keyboard and gently shake, bend and stretch your fingers and hands.