How much do you know about healthy ergonomic habits? Take the quiz to find out.

1. Poor lifting techniques or sitting for long periods can lead to back pain.
2. When using a keyboard, your wrists should be positioned high above your fingers.
3. A dusty or blurry monitor or glare on the screen can cause eye strain and headaches. So can hours of computer use without a break.
4. Positioning your monitor the right way can prevent neck and shoulder pain.
5. Poor ergonomics can lead to injuries that cause pain and make it hard to get work done.

Many working adults spend most of their time sitting at a desk or in front of a computer. Good ergonomics can protect your back, joints, and body.

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Straighten Up at Work.”
2. Practice ergonomic habits on at least 22 days this month.
3. Keep a record of your completed challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

Have you ever wondered how massive stones were moved to build the Egyptian pyramids? Or The Great Wall of China? Brute force and lots of manpower seems like the obvious answer. However, both groups of people learned that there was a better way to perform this task.

Research shows Egyptian builders poured water on the sand to glide heavy stones across the desert. And many of the stones that make up the 5,500 miles of The Great Wall of China were moved by sliding them on an icy path during cold weather.

When you get to work, you’re probably not going to move heavy stones by hand. But you will perform a variety of tasks that can take a toll on your body, like using a computer, sitting at a desk, and talking on the phone. Fortunately, good ergonomics can make a difference. Take the month-long Health Challenge and Straighten Up at Work to improve your health.

The Trouble with Poor Posture

Ever spent hours hunched over a keyboard? Or felt your neck start to hurt after a long phone call? It happens. Fatigue, poor health, or simply using a computer, office chair, or other equipment in the wrong way can be harmful. In fact, poor posture and ergonomics can lead to:

- Muscle strain
- Joint pain
- Chronic headaches
- Tendon injuries
- Lower back problems
- Eye strain
- Increased medical costs
- Missed days at work
- Decreased productivity

Practice Healthy Ergonomic Habits

Finding a better way to move heavy stones helped work crews in ancient Egypt and China. It probably cut the risk of muscle aches, back pain, and on-the-job injuries too. Thousands of years later, working efficiently to protect your health and your body is still important. Here are some ways to practice healthy ergonomic habits at work:
1. Use proper lifting techniques
Bend your knees and squat to pick up an object. Keep your back straight and hold the object close to your body. Avoid twisting your body when lifting. Push rather than pull when you need to move heavy objects. If it’s too heavy to move comfortably, get help.

2. Practice good posture
At the risk of sounding like your grade-school teacher, don’t slouch. Sit up straight, walk tall with your head up. Good posture prevents strain on your bones, joints, muscles, and tendons.

3. Avoid back injuries while sitting
Sit with your feet supported, hips level or slightly below the knees. Keep your spine vertical or slightly reclined, and a small arch in the lower back. Avoid slouching or working hunched over. Your shoulders should be relaxed. Keep your elbows by your side, bent to about 90 degrees. Your wrists should be in a neutral position (not bent up, down, or away from each other). Keep your head facing forward without straining your neck.

4. Take regular breaks
Stretch or walk around the office every hour or so. If possible, stand for part of the day – perhaps when you are on the phone.

5. Wear supportive footwear
Avoid wearing high-heeled shoes, or footwear that is uncomfortable or lacks support. Wearing supportive shoes provides cushioning and protects your arches, back, knees, and hips. If you’re on your feet for long periods, stand on a padded mat.

6. Exercise and eat healthy
Regular exercise strengthens your bones, joints, and muscles. It also lowers your risk for injury. A mix of strength training and aerobic activity is best. A healthy diet also supports bone health and weight management. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, and low-fat dairy or soy products fortified with calcium.

The Power of Good Posture
In the 21st century, you’re probably not going to have to move heavy stones by hand. But your day-to-day activities can still take a toll on your muscles, joints, and body. With good posture and ergonomics, you’ll be healthier, happier, and more productive.
# Health Challenge™ Calendar

## Straighten Up at Work

### Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you practice good ergonomics.
3. Use the calendar to record the days you made ergonomics a regular part of your life.
4. At the end of the month, total the number of days you practiced good posture and ergonomics. You must do this on at least 22 days this month to complete this challenge. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

### Challenge

**Improve posture and ergonomics**

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_______ Number of days this month I practiced good ergonomics

_______ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity

### Other wellness projects completed this month:

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

Name _____________________________________________ Date __________________________