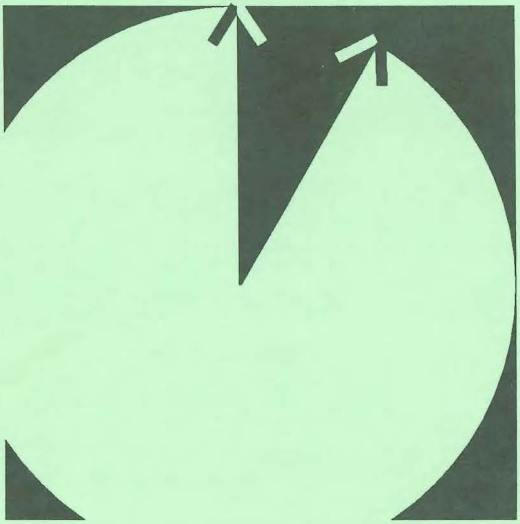
TAKE THE TIME

A Safety Program for VDT Operators



Developed by the
Risk Management Division
of the Department of Administrative
and Financial Services, State of Maine

in association with
Keystone Enterprises Computer Consultants
and the Kennebec Valley YMCA

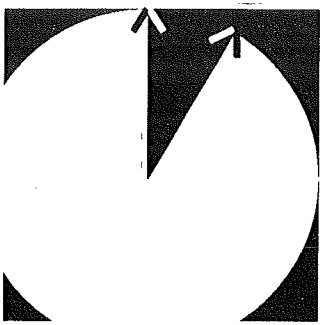
KEYSTONE
ENTERPRISES

The Purpose of Risk Management

Within the state system, when people think of insurance or have a claim, their thoughts turn to *Risk Management*–the division of the Department of Administration created in 1965 to insure state properties and activities from financial loss. However, to assume Risk Management is only about insurance would be a mistake, as the staff would be eager to tell you.

If the people of Risk Management had to choose one word to describe their mission, that word would be prevention. *The mission of Risk Management is to prevent accidents and injuries from taking place.* This is accomplished through communication and innovation: *communicate* the risks and the means to manage the risks, then provide *innovative solutions* (such as the following program).

All employees of the state of Maine are entitled to a safe and healthy work environment, but the establishment and maintenance of such an environment requires a continuous and concerted effort that addresses *all* aspects of health and safety–both on the job and off.



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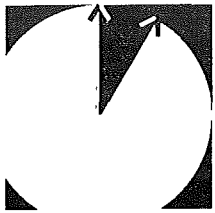
VDT Exercise Illustrations (back cover) reprinted with permission from the Digital Corporation.

"Signed into Law"

On July 1, 1989, Governor John McKernan signed into law a bill, Public Law 512, which requires managers to provide training to operators of Video Display Terminals (VDT's) in the proper use of the equipment. One of the primary influences in generating this legislation is the increasing occurrence of illnesses among such employees. These illnesses are collectively referred to as "Repetitive Motion Sickness" or "Cumulative Trauma Disease". Among the specific illnesses are "Carpal Tunnel Syndrome" and "Tendonitis". The law requiring this training took effect as of January 1, 1990.



Team Effort

Kennebec Valley YMCA and Bob Meixell combine to promote VDT safety.

FOREWARD

Founded in 1914, the **Kennebec Valley YMCA** remains a non-profit, social service agency now serving over 2,500 members in the Southern Kennebec Valley region. Its well-rounded staff holds certificates from the *YMCA of the USA, American Red Cross, American Heart Association*, and many aerobic certification programs; its instructors are skilled in first aid, CPR, fitness training, aerobic instruction, aquatic instruction, and weight training.

In 1986, the KVYMCA found a new way to make an impact on its community: by providing wellness and fitness activities—including programs which dealt with arthritis, pre, peri, and post-natal care, back rehabilitation, fitness evaluations, etc.—to the people of area businesses and corporations.

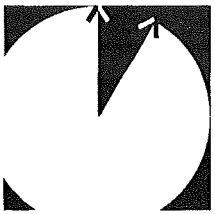
Involvement with the Video Display Terminal Safety Training came in 1990, while pooling resources with Bob Meixell of Keystone Enterprises to augment the VDT safety training already being administered throughout the state.

Bob Meixell's background is just as impressive: twenty years of Navy service and ten years at Bath Iron Works (in addition to his work for the State of Maine and Keystone Enterprises). He has educated people at every stop, culminating with his work for the Risk Management Division of the State of Maine's Department of Administration through his own Keystone Enterprises.

Bob Meixell pointed out the VDT problem and originated this program in 1990, and has been traveling to the far reaches of Maine ever since, teaching people proper use of Video Display Terminals. He remains determined to foster an awareness of the subtle dangers of using a VDT within both employer and employee ranks .

You can be confident that the state-wide team effort by KVYMCA and Bob Meixell against Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and various other VDT-related ailments will raise awareness levels and go a long way toward the prevention of these problems.. The fine work of everyone involved reflects Risk Management's commitment to the program.

This booklet was designed as a companion piece to the KVYMCA/Keystone Enterprises VDT safety presentation.



Taking the Time

An extra second today could eliminate lost time (and wages) tomorrow.

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of history, many major technological advances have been accompanied by safety concerns. From the development of mass production machinery to the automobile to nuclear power, measures have been taken to make these innovations safe for people before, during, and after their inception. In the case of all three aforementioned examples, research is *still being conducted* to make them safer for the people who use them.

Within the past decade, no technological advance has had the same universal impact upon our world as has the personal computer. Though a seemingly hazard-free innovation, a growing number of personal injuries directly linked to the use of Video Display Terminals have surfaced since the year of its inception.

While few previous technological breakthroughs have revealed their dangers so insidiously, fewer still have such simple remedies for eliminating these dangers.

The following booklet was designed as a companion piece to Risk Management's VDT Safety Class. Within these pages you'll find a listing of the quick and simple corrective measures for making your VDT workstation a comfortably efficient one.

Read through this booklet, then take the time to adjust your workstation. Do the exercises on a daily basis. Concentrate on maintaining good posture. Take the time, because as you'll soon find out, your health may depend on it.

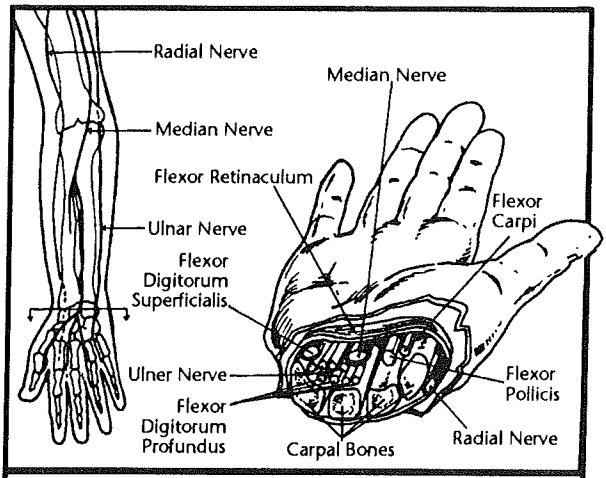
BACKGROUND

VDT Effects

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is the most dangerous of all VDT-related ailments

Operating a VDT doesn't seem like a dangerous activity—it really doesn't need to be—yet the instances of illnesses relating to these occupations are increasing at an alarming rate, *despite that they are almost 100% preventable.*

These ailments are not trivial ones; they affect both employees and employers, physically, mentally, and financially. A single instance of *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome* could incur medical expenses in excess of $200,000.00, in addition to equally-costly side effects. *However, no expenditure will appease a CTS victim handicapped for life. And any loss of an employee makes a financial dent in a company or organization approximately equal to that employee's annual salary.*



Tendons that operate the hand and fingers pass through a narrow area inside the wrist known as the carpal tunnel. These tendons surround the median nerve—one of the two nerves that control wrist and finger motions.

Of all VDT-related illnesses, *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome* is perhaps the most serious. The tendons that operate the hand and

fingers pass through a narrow area inside the wrist known as the *carpal tunnel.* These tendons surround the *median nerve*– one of the two nerves that control wrist and finger motions. Repetitive motions over an extended period irritate the tendons, causing them to swell and put pressure on the median nerve. This causes a variety of symptoms: some people feel a tingling sensation in their fingers, others lose sense of touch.

This condition may progress to a point where the victim cannot exert any force in closing the hand. It becomes difficult or impossible for the victim to pick up his or her own child. Or open a door. Or tie a shoe. Or continue to operate a keyboard. Treatments vary in degree and expense from one patient to another and can include surgery, braces, and/or various methods of physical therapy.

The least expensive treatment is *prevention.*

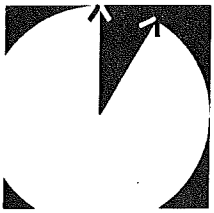
VDT operators throughout the State are now receiving preventative VDT training in an effort to keep employees out of the hospital and on the job. This is great news to the employers of Maine, as well as the employees, themselves, who prefer tax-paying status to being disabled or on a welfare roll. (And no amount of financial compensation could ever adequately compensate for the pain and suffering of an advanced case of *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.*)

While preventive measures are many times simple and inexpensive, some do cost money. Money is not available to replace our computer furniture and hardware immediately; managers will be asked to do those things that are quick and inexpensive now, while planning simultaneously for those changes that will require more time and money. Money or no money, *the most effective preventative measures known can be implemented immediately for they are directly related to the way you work.*

The following booklet lists those factors known to cause *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome* and other VDT-related aliments, while offering some very specific remedial actions designed to eliminate those

same factors. And while few of our VDT workstations will be converted into the "ideal" in the near future, many opportunities for improvement will be illustrated. *These types of corrective actions will be crucial for those employees who operate a VDT more than four hours per day on a regular basis. For those who use the VDT workstation for a few 15-minute periods a day, these considerations are less critical.* We should, nevertheless, work toward improving all conditions surrounding our VDTs, regardless of our current usage patterns, since our needs and levels of utilization will continue to change.

This booklet will not put forth any one single formula for determining whether or not a workstation is correctly assembled. A workstation that is ideal for one person may be quite inappropriate for another. Numbers and standards will be cited throughout this booklet, but because each VDT operator will differ in size, shape and special needs, these citations should be considered *guidelines*. (For people with special needs, it may be necessary to apply other standards altogether.)



PART 1

Furniture

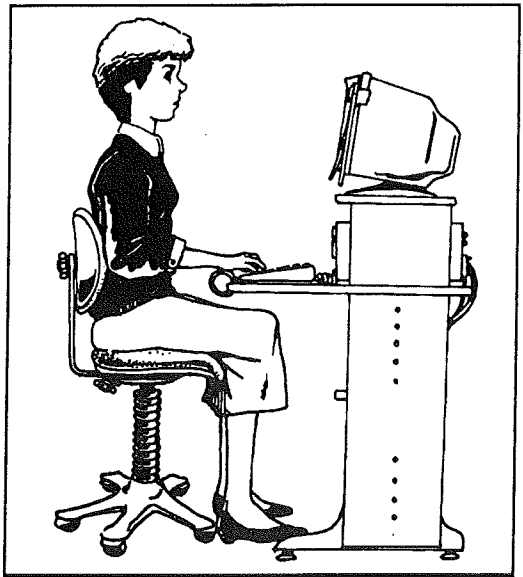
A workstation should be constructed around an operator's needs.

The Worktable

Ideally, one's worktable should be adjustable in height, especially if there is no separate adjustable keyboard shelf. Possibly the worst situation an operator can be in is one with a VDT placed on a conventional desk or table. In this situation, the keyboard will most likely be at a height uncomfortable for the typical

operator, putting excess stress on the shoulder muscles. Neck pains from awkward monitor angles are another result of conventional desk use.

The table should be adjustable to a height within a range of 25 to 30 inches (26 to 27 inches would suffice) if there is no adjustable keyboard shelf. The table top or keyboard shelf should not be much thicker than one inch. If you have an adjustable keyboard shelf, it should be set so that your arms form a 90° angle at the elbow when you are seated comfortably. If there is no separate keyboard shelf and the table height is adjustable, set the adjustment low enough to get this result. If, for the present, you have only a normal height (29" to 30") table, try to vary your routine by placing the keyboard in a drawer or on your lap. (At the same time, request that you be fitted with a more suitable arrangement.) Continuous use with the keyboard at desk-top height can lead to backaches, pains in the shoulders and headaches. The best situation is a workstation with a separately adjustable keyboard shelf that can be set from 2 to 6 inches below table height (it should not be much thicker than one inch). Some of these shelves also tilt, putting the keyboard at an even better angle for typing. (In many cases, the keyboard itself has a set of "feet" that can be extended to tilt the keyboard.)



A personalized workstation: adjusted document holder, 20° viewing angle, well-adjusted chair (proper back support and feet position), good posture (with 90° arm and leg angles), and good wrist angle (adjusted wrist-rest).

If a"wrist-rest" is available, try using it. For some people, such a device reduces the fatigue caused by holding one's wrists in a constant position.

The Chair

Poor seating is the cause of many backaches, leg circulation problems and general fatigue—*it is critical you learn everything about your chair and how the adjustments work.* It is up to you to make these adjustments according to your own body's needs. Get the height set for the ideal arm angle (mentioned above). Achieving this position requires you to pay attention to the heights of both the keyboard and chair. Afterward, make sure the backrest is adjusted to give you the best support possible. Some experimentation may be needed to find the best setting for you.

Once your chair has been adjusted to the correct height, check your feet. When you are seated normally, having achieved the best possible position at the keyboard, are your feet resting firmly on the floor? Without excessive pressure on the thighs just above the knee? Long periods of pressure against the lower thigh can interfere with the circulation to your legs and cause a variety of problems. To avoid this, it may be desirable for you to use a foot-rest. (The shorter you are, the more likely you will need one.) A foot-rest can be improvised from a cut-down box filled with computer paper.

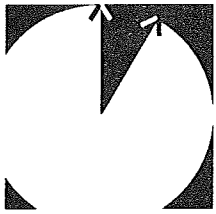
See the illustration on page 7 for more detailed dimensional information, but remember that personal preferences make other standards necessary. Remember, this illustration is based on what is considered "normal" but may be unrealistic if you have special, specific needs.

Accessories

If your work consists of entering data from hard copy documents into a VDT system, a document holder and task lamp will be helpful. *A good document holder will permit the document to be*

displayed on one side of the VDT screen, at the same height and distance from your eyes as the screen. The result is little or no head movement and no re-focusing of the eyes when you shift your view from the document to the screen (and back). This arrangement helps eliminate eyestrain (and makes your work easier). In addition, a good document-holder will have a *matte*, a non-reflecting surface to avoid glare.

If you have a *task lamp*, adjust it so there is no glare when your document is illuminated. Selection of the light bulb is important; make sure yours is one that balances low wattage with good visibility.



PART 2

Hardware

Keyboards and monitors can be adjusted to fit an operator's needs.

The Keyboard

Of the keyboards available, the most widely-used is the "101" style (twelve function keys, eighteen numberpad keys, one-hundred one keys overall). *All of the "101" style keyboards currently being supplied by major vendors meet state and federal criteria for touch sensitivity and other operator considerations*. These keyboards are separate from the Central Processing Unit (CPU) and are connected to the computer by a flexible cable—one long enough to provide flexibility in terms of keyboard positioning. This type of flexibility is crucial, because it is through subtle adjusting and positioning that an operator can often times avoid fatigue. One way you can achieve keyboard position variety is by occasionally placing the keyboard on your lap. This type of flexibility, coupled with the keyboard's adjustable "feet" (to permit tilting), are extremely useful. Experiment with your keyboard until you find

your own variety of comfortable operating positions.

The Monitor

Your monitor—the television-like screen that is the focus of all VDT systems—should have a clear and constant image and controls for adjusting brilliance and contrast. The brilliance control should be adjusted so that there is a maximum amount of light without revealing any light from the background area or from "retrace." Once you have set the brilliance level, adjust the contrast to a comfortable level.

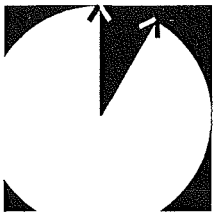
Just like your keyboard, the position of your monitor is important. If your monitor is adjustable (some tilt and swivel), it should be adjusted so that the center of the screen is perpendicular to your line of sight. Try not to place your monitor atop your Central Processing Unit (CPU). Although many computer advertisements portray this arrangement (and for some this actually may be the best monitor location) it is a poor viewing location for most. Generally, a 20° down angle from the operator's eyes to the center of the screen is the most comfortable viewing angle. This angle is achieved when the top of the screen is nearly level with—or slightly below—your eyes. For many, it is desirable to have the monitor atop the table-top with the CPU to one side, accessible for diskette use. These guidelines may not apply to people with special visual needs. (Bi-focal or tri-focal eyeglasses will affect an operator's most comfortable viewing angle.)

Hardware Accessories

If your system includes a CPU, it should be near the monitor—preferably to one side—accessible for diskette use. Your CPU should also be positioned so the indicator lights are easily visible. Some CPU's can operate when placed "on end," using one of its sides as the base. If this set-up would enable your workstation to become more in line with your needs, check the operating manual or clear the procedure with the equipment vendor before proceeding; some CPU's will perform unreliably in this position.

If yours will allow for this set-up, it might be an advantage to you through a more economized workspace.

Whether directly or through a network, most VDT systems are connected to a printer. Your printer should be located so that there is easy access for paper loading and output removal. Many printers are noisy. If this is the case, it is necessary to locate them some distance away from the VDT workstation to eliminate any distraction. (A side benefit from this set-up is stress-relieving work interruptions—when you have to rise and move to retrieve your printed output, you are breaking up an otherwise continuous session of repeated motions.) If you cannot relocate the machine, a sound-absorbing enclosure may be necessary to eliminate noise.



PART 3

Lighting

Don't just settle for the original workspace lighting arrangement.

Windows

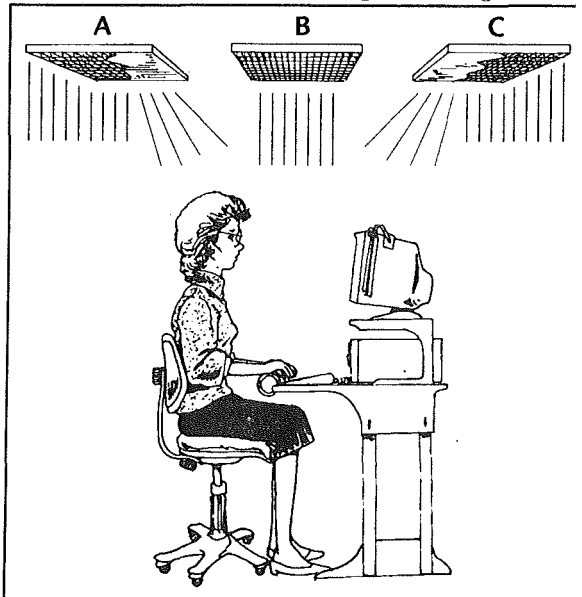
One of the principles of traditional office spaces has been a propensity to light naturally, through use of many windows. As a result, many of today's offices have no adequate way to control the amount of light for individual workspaces.

Any time you operate a VDT, your eyes will be constantly adjusting, your pupils widening, trying to admit as much light as possible. Yet, if your VDT monitor faces a window, your pupils will automatically narrow to limit the incoming light. This constant struggle against diametrically opposing influences can cause you to develop eyestrain, headaches, nausea and/or other symptoms.

So should you face your monitor away from any windows?

Curiously, it is nearly as bad to be facing directly away from a window, because of the excessive amount of glare reflecting from the screen into your eyes. In this case, the eyes and the brain must differentiate the glare from the "useful light" from the screen—causing the same symptoms as the opposite arrangement, though usually less severe.

Whenever windows are in the vicinity of a VDT, the workstation should be oriented at right angles to the window, allowing natural light from the your right or left. In addition, windows should be equipped with adjustable blinds or drapes so natural light can be reduced to a level comfortable for your eyes.



Whenever there is a light source directly behind or in front of you (fixtures "A" and "C"), your eyes will encounter strain from either competing lights or glare. (Although louvered fixtures help control this problem by casting light downward.) In this illustration, the best placed fixture for proper illumination is "B", especially if it is oriented to the right or left.

Fluorescent light will be harsher on your eyes than incandescent. You will experience irritation if light enters your eyes directly from a fluorescent lamp. Such light gives the eye no useful information. (The only useful light we receive is from objects illuminated by the lamp, VDT screen light, indicator lights, etc. *Whenever you have an overhead lamp shining directly into your eyes, request that the offending bulbs be removed.* (Removal of bulbs is an interim solution; the fixture eventually should be moved, disconnected, or equipped with a

separate switch.) A relatively low amount of general lighting will most often eliminate eyestrain.

Task lighting to illuminate selected documents, papers, manuals, etc. may be your best lighting solution. Task lamps with an adjustable brilliance feature are preferred. (If this is not practical, you should experiment with bulbs of various wattages in order to select a comfortable lighting level for your document.) All task lighting should be incandescent. You should be able to adjust the position of this lamp so it illuminates the work without shining directly into your eyes or causing glare from the screen.

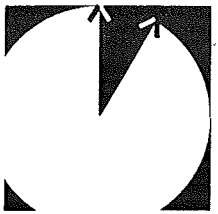
Lighting Accessories

Where there is no economical way to adequately control the light and/or the glare from the source there are other ways to cope with these problems. Unwanted light can often be kept from your screen installing *screen shields*. Screen shields are typically formed from sheet aluminum, painted matte black, and designed for positioning between the screen and the light source. If a screen shield is not available, other materials can be employed as an interim solution.

Glare screens are also available. Glare screens are made from polarized glass or plastic, and fitted over a monitor screen with velcro attachments. In difficult lighting environments, it can increase the amount of useful light from the screen. Try to avoid glare screens with built-in wire grids.

If your problem is light from ceiling fixtures shining directly into your eyes, the most effective procedure is to remove the lighting fixture or turn those lights off. If this is impossible, wear an *eye-shield*. An eye-shield is shaped like the visor of a cap but is usually made of green or blue plastic. Wearing a baseball cap can be as effective, but many operators prefer the eye-shield because of its elastic headband (nothing actually covers the head).

A final way to cut down on eyestrain is to pay attention to your clothes. Avoid white shirts/blouses and flashy jewelry—both can cause very noticeable reflections from the screen.



Environment

Be aware of all the "little things" going on around you.

PART 4

Room Temperature & Ventilation

The job of the VDT operator is, by nature, sedentary. Physical exertion is minimal, leaving little chance for aerobic activity or excess body heat. This being the case, your health, comfort, and effectiveness must be maintained by keeping your environment at a comfortable temperature and humidity.

In winter, a temperature range of 68°F to 74°F is recommended; in summer, 70°F to 76°F. The relative humidity should be kept between 50% and 60%. Adequate air circulation is also important to avoid odor build-up and prevent "stuffiness" in the office. Properly-installed vents should enhance circulation without causing any noticeable drafts.

Few offices are ideal in these respects, so it will be up to you to monitor room temperature and ventilation. You may have to provide a short-term solution for some problems by being creative in your use of existing facilities. Meanwhile, your manager should be taking steps to find long-term solutions to these problems.

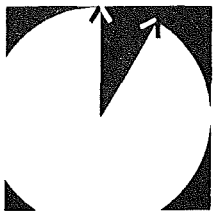
Distractions

It is difficult for a VDT operator to work well in a distracting environment. Any animated discussion held near an VDT workstation may directly contribute to that operator's poor performance, reduced production, irritability, and/or stress level. While this may seem less serious, such distractions may only complicate an operator's already stressful schedule. If you are repeatedly distracted from your VDT work, consult with your manager.

Miscellaneous

Try to keep your work environment clean, pleasant and safe. Keep your table-top free of clutter; keep your keyboard, monitor, and other hardware dust-free (through weekly cleanings and daily use of dust covers); keep food, cups, and mugs away from your table-top and hardware; make sure your supervisors are aware of unsafe wiring/cabling situations.

It is particularly important you pay attention to your VDT's wiring and cabling. VDT's are electrical devices, so all power cords must be kept in good condition, circuits must be properly grounded, and any problem with static electricity should be addressed (*static mats* can help eliminate excessive static). Static electricity build-up can affect you physically—causing tension and apprehension—while at the same time harming sensitive computer circuits.



PART 5

Personal

The way you sit and view your screen can determine your health.

Ergonomics

If the extent of your VDT use is a few 15-minute periods per day, the following VDT-related personal considerations may not be vital to your future good health. *However, if you use your VDT 4 hours a day or more, pay serious attention to these considerations.*

VDT *ergonomics*, the interrelationship between the machine and the person, is a complex subject. Any single cause may be responsible for multiple effects, and vice-versa. And while we haven't all the answers (studies are still in progress to deepen our current VDT knowledge), there exist some VDT-related cause-

and-effect relationships we can remedy. *We know that sitting erect with proper support of our back's lumbar region is important for backache prevention. We know tight-fitting jeans can inhibit this good posture. We know adjusting your chair to a proper height helps to prevent a variety of muscle and eye ailments. We know proper monitor and keyboard positioning, eyeglasses, and lighting all combine to reduce eyestrain and headache problems.* Essentially, most of what we know derives from posture and eyesight principles.

Posture

No two elements dictate whether a workstation is a healthy one more than *posture* and *eyesight*–at times, they are even interconnected. Do you slouch forward because your eyeglasses focus to the wrong distance? Should you be wearing bi-focals? Even though you don't need glasses for ordinary activity, have you considered that you might be better off if you had a pair for VDT work? Does your job give you backaches? Do you have sore arms and/or shoulders by the end of the day? Do your eyes hurt? Do you have frequent headaches?

Seating posture and keyboard position are inescapably linked: *unless both are correct, neither is adequate.* Good posture begins with a properly adjusted workstation (see Part One). Once adjusted, sit back in your seat, so the small of your back is properly supported by the back rest. Turn your chair so that you are square with the monitor and keyboard. Establish a sitting position with your arms and legs bent at 90° angles. *Don't hunch over, sit straight up.*

Eyesight

When was your last eye examination? More than a year ago? If you don't wear eyeglasses regularly, carefully consider whether a pair might aid you at work. If you've the slightest doubt, arrange for a check-up with an eye-care provider of your choice. If you do wear glasses, is your prescription current? Was it designed for computer work? Should you be wearing bifocals or trifocals?

Whatever your prescription, at least one part of your lenses

must accomodate clear focusing for distances between 16" and 30" (24" nominal). You may consider owning a separate pair of glasses specifically for your VDT work—it might make the difference between daily eyestrain, headaches, and other problems.

Constant monitor viewing can tire and dry out your eyes. When this occurs, refocus on a different object for a few moments (a painting across the room, for example). If you experience irritation, consult a doctor, eye-care provider, or therapist—each can prescribe specific eye exercises for you. Make sure any examining doctor is made aware of your job and the number of hours a day you are at a VDT. *You might be entitled to an annual eye examination subsidized by your employer.*

Quick Solutions

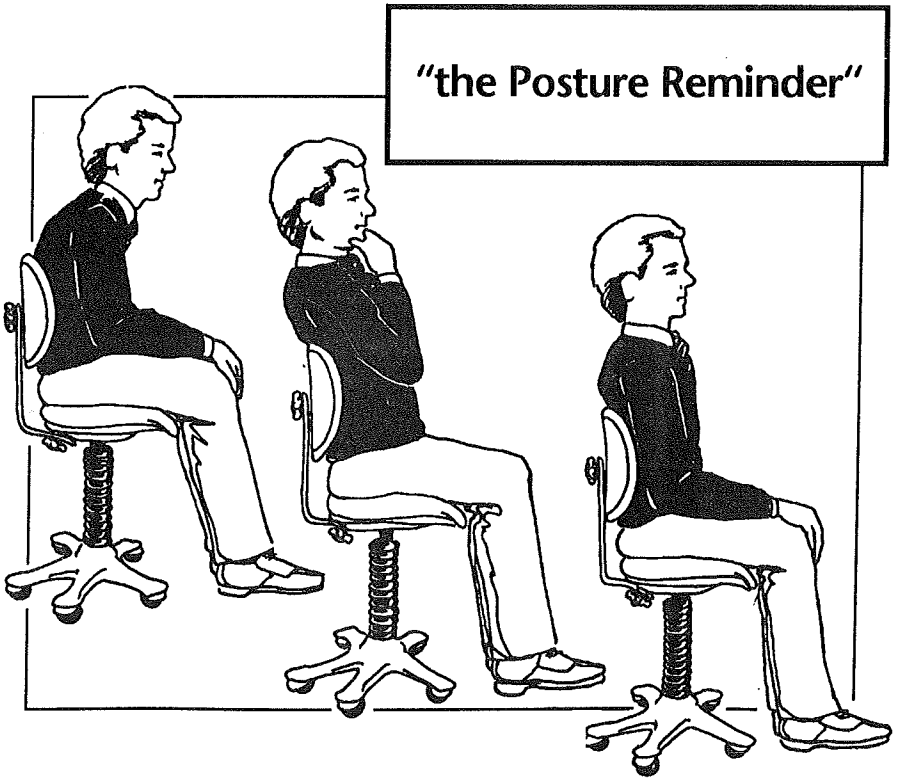
Most ailments are either caused or aggravated by the daily repetitive use of the same muscles, eye focal distances, procedures, motions, etc. The most serious maladies take months or sometimes years to develop, yet procedures for preventing them require only minutes of common sense thinking:

- Make sure you are doing everything possible to make your equipment, posture, eyeglasses and environment comfortable and personalized.
- Be conscientious about advising your manager about those problems you cannot solve without his or her help, then pay attention to your own common sense.
- During your break, do something radically different from your VDT work. Take a walk, stretch—do anything to get your legs and lower body active while resting your hands and eyes (piano playing would be highly inappropriate).
- Take your breaks whenever *you* need them. If it can be helped, try to avoid working through your breaks Be judicious about overtime, as well. If your hands, arms, and/or eyes have had enough for one day, let your supervisor know.

• Take stress-relieving "mini-breaks." There are many mini-exercises you can do without taking major breaks from your work. Some emphasize posture, some are designed to stretch tense or tired wrists, arms, shoulders, necks, and/or lower backs. *Keep in mind this will never approach a body-building effort—pain plays no part in these exercises.* During all exercises detailed in the lecture part of this presentation, you should stop the stretch motion before you get to a point where it hurts.

Exercise

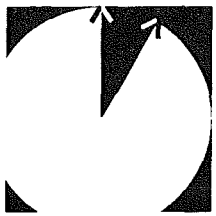
Included with this program is a detailed exercise chart designed to keep you loose and comfortable. While your workstation and



environment only need to be maintained once they have been adjusted to you, your exercise will need to be built in to your everyday work routine.

The exercises suggested on the inside back cover are not difficult. They concentrate on your eyes, neck, upper and lower back, shoulders, wrists, fingers, and heart rate. They are easy, fun, and—most of all—integral for healthy VDT work.

Illustrated on the opposite page is an example of the type of exercise we suggest; it is called "the Posture Reminder." Take a few seconds and press in on your chin with your thumb or index finger as shown. This action will serve as a daily reminder that your head should be over your spine—not in front of it.



PART 6

Other Hazards

Studies on radiation, electromagnetic fields, and more are being done.

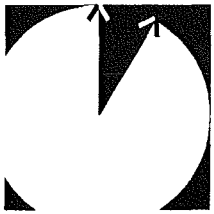
Radiation

Some VDT operators have expressed fears about being exposed to *radiation*. The types of radiation produced by a computer have been researched extensively, and are considered "naturally occurring background radiation." The studies are still being conducted, however, and while it is uncertain whether or not hazards exist, it remains impossible to cite any specific hazards at this time.

Another area of uncertainty concerns *electromagnetic fields*. Anything that involves an electrical current of any kind produces a magnetic field. Studies have shown that VDT electromagnetic fields are less powerful than those produced by small kitchen appliances (coffee-makers, etc.). As was the case with radiation,

electromagnetic fields pose no known threat at this time.

The State of Maine, Department of Administrative and Financial Services, *Risk Management Division* will announce any significant new finding if and when such information becomes available. *Risk Management* and the Maine Department of Labor can answer questions on any recently released information.



Conclusion

The key to good health depends on how often you take the time for it.

Summary

Since your ability to return to work on a consistant, daily basis is an absolute necessity, and you need to remain in good health and spirit to accomplish this, it is in your best interest to pay specific attention to your VDT procedures. Whenever possible, meet with your supervisor and discuss what needs to happen to improve your working environment. Work together and plan for a better future workstation. You both have recently attended presentations designed to make you more aware of your conditions and what can be done about them in both the short and long term. The next step is yours. Begin with things which can be done quickly with little or no funding. Afterward, plan realistically for the improvements which will be needed for future productive VDT work.

It should be everybody's long-term goal to build an optimum work environment. It is everyone's goal to keep you out of the hospital, on the job, and healthy.

We wish you a long, problem-free relationship with your job and your workstation.

"Wellness"

Each day we face three responsibilities—one to our job, one to our family, and one to ourselves. Most of us attempt to devote all our energies toward the first two, leaving ourselves with whatever is left over. The unfortunate reality of today's fast-paced world is there is sometimes nothing left to give ourselves. We shortchange ourselves again and again, until our well is dry.

A health and safety program cannot be effective unless it deals with the whole person—not two-thirds. While your employer must—and should—take responsibility for providing a safe and healthy work environment, you must take the ultimate responsibility for your own mind, body, and spirit.

A step toward this end involves knowing your own body and its limitations. You must understand that your work and play wear and tear at it, leading to injury, illness, aging, and an overall loss in the quality of your life. Knowing how you break down is as important as knowing how you are put together—this recognition allows you the means and motivation to take proper care of your body.

In order to fulfill your responsibility to yourself, here are some suggestions for personal wellness:

Keep fit. Develop a fitness program that improves your endurance and flexibility. Contour it to the demands of your life, but make it a priority. It does not require a lot of time and money to be effective, but it does require adherence.

Practice stress control. Your stress level can be reduced or even eliminated. Find out more by taking a class or reading existing literature.

Learn and practice good eating habits. Find out how nutrition and gaining/losing weight effect your health.

Avoid vices. (Smoking, alcohol, drugs, etc.)

Get enough sleep. Proper rest has an impact on the way you do your job.

Learn to enjoy yourself. Set aside the time to do the things you like to do. You will be happier and healthier.

Others can only do so much. The ultimate resonsibility for your personal wellness lies with *you*.

Risk Management Hotline: 1-800-525-1252

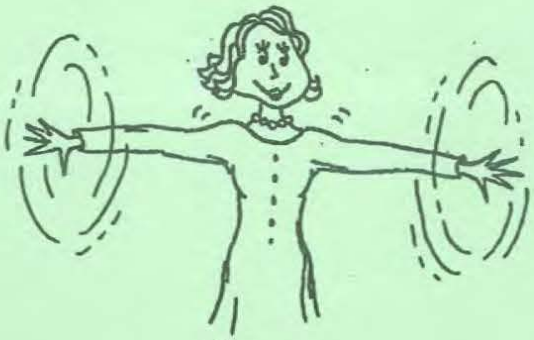
7 Daily Exercises

1 Deep Breathing
For a relaxing warm-up, inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth, letting your stomach expand and contract. *Repeat 6 times.*

2 Reaching High
Then, stretch stiff muscles by raising your arms over your head, stretching as high as you can. *Repeat 2 times.*

3 Neck Glide
For stiff neck relief, glide your head back as far as it will go, keeping your head and ears level. Slowly bring it forward. *Repeat 3 times.*

4 Upper Back Stretch
To relieve shoulder and back tension, first raise your hands to your shoulders, then, using your arms, push your shoulders back (keep your elbows down). *Hold for 15 seconds, repeat 3 times.*



5 Lower Back Stretch
To relieve any pressure on your lumbar, lower your head and slowly roll your body as far as you can to your knees. *Hold for 10 seconds, push up with your legs, repeat 3 times.*

6 Arm Circles
To alleviate shoulder stiffness, raise your arms, straighten your elbows, and slowly rotate your arms in small circles forward, then backward. *Repeat 3 times.*

7 Wrist Flex
For relief of hand and finger tension, place one elbow on a table, hand raised. With your other hand, gently bend it back toward the forearm. Hold 5 seconds, switch hands. *Repeat 3 times.*

10 Palming
In order to rest your eyes from the light, shape your hands into shallow cups and place them lightly over your closed eyes. *Hold for one minute.*

12 Eye Rolling
Finally, to exercise those muscles that control eye movement, roll your eyeballs clockwise 3 times, then counterclockwise. *(Make wide circles.)*

8 Finger Fan
Another reliever of hand and finger tension. Hold your hands in front of you, palms down. Spread your fingers apart as far as possible. Hold for 5 seconds, then make tight fists. *Repeat 3 times.*

9 Blinking
To keep your eyes moist, prevent itching, and aid cleaning, make sure you blink often.

11 Refocusing
To exercise the eye muscles that focus your lenses, periodically look away from the monitor and focus on an object at least 20 feet away. *Repeat 3 times.*

Illustrations appear courtesy of the Digital Corporation