



Kids ergonomics: Healthy working and living



Having four children of my own, I understand the continual fight we have as modern parents to get our children to take a break from their devices.

Children’s bodies are strong and adaptable and in all likelihood, recover faster from static and awkward postures than we do as adults. However, this does not mean that they are not at risk of developing ergonomic-related disorders. Their bodies priority is to grow, not withstand prolonged postures and combat the effects of sedentary lifestyles.

This guideline has been developed by Ergomax Holdings, in association with Cardinus Risk Management, to help us, as parents, teach our children responsible technology interaction. The Cardinus “Healthy Working: Move” is available online for FREE at <http://www.ergo4students.com/> for your children to work through and understand the risks.

The priority of a child’s body, is to grow, not withstand prolonged postures and combat the effects of sedentary lifestyles.

Children use computers, tablets and smartphones in ways that would not be acceptable for adults in the workplace. In fact, there are Regulations in South Africa to protect employees from ergonomic-related risks. These activities can pose serious threats to their long-term health particularly as children's bodies are still developing. Think of the exposure duration your children will have to ergonomic risk factors when they start working!

If we don't take action now we may have a serious health problem in the future with young adults experiencing ergonomic-related injuries when starting their career.

What are the ergonomic risk factors?

Force
Repetition
Awkward postures
Static postures
Contact stress
Vibration
Work organisation
Mental demands and overload



Mental overload of information

Force to hold my head up

Static posture to keep my head stable and focus my eyes

Awkward posture. of my neck and shoulders and wrists



Consider the weekly usage reports that your device gives you. This will give you an accurate idea of the amount of time you spend on the device and which apps you are using.

Do you know that the former recommendations of exercising 30 minutes a day is now understood to be insufficient to undo the damage of sedentary lifestyle. There are risks associate with not moving enough which will give any parent room for concern. No matter your body weight or how much you exercise, sitting too much still results in increased health risk.

Sedentary life style = Lack of sufficient movement.

There is evidence that children in both Canada and the USA accumulate more than 6 hours of screen-time a daily basis. Keep in mind that screen-time is almost exclusively sedentary.

What are the sedentary risk factors?

Weak brain functions

Sudden mood swings

Disrupted sleep



Increases hunger and make us seek out energy dense foods (Sweets)

Muscles have a harder time absorbing glucose.

Increase risk of obesity

Each hour of daily television viewing is associated with an 11% increase in the risk of all-cause mortality regardless of age, sex, waist circumference, and physical activity level.



Sedentary



Moderate exercise



Vigorous exercise



Exercise recommendations for Kids

Children 3-5 years old should be physically active and have plenty of opportunities to move throughout the day.

Kids 6-17 years old should get at least 60 minutes per day of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity, mostly aerobic.

Include vigorous-intensity activity on at least 3 days per week.

Include muscle- and bone-strengthening (weight-bearing) activities on at least 3 days per week. Increase amount and intensity gradually over time.

(American Heart Association)

Ergonomic Tips for you children

Using a tablet or smart phone

(Cardinus Risk Management limited)



At a desk:

Sit with your feet flat on the floor or supported so that your knees slightly lower than your hips and your elbows.

Using a tablet flat on a desk can encourage an unhealthy neck posture. Use a stand to raise it up, an angle of about 45° is best to watch films or tv; an angle of about 30° is best for typing.



Lying down:

When you use a device laying on your front place a cushion under your chest to support your weight and prevent you over arching your lower back.

The light from a tablet or smartphone screen can make you restless and disrupt your sleep. Aim to stop using the device at least an hour before you go to bed. This will help improve the quality of your sleep.

On a couch:

Comfy furniture, such as an armchair or sofa, moulds to the body and offers little support to maintain a good posture, remember to change your position and take regular breaks from your device.

If your arms drop too low using a tablet or smartphone it forces you to bend your neck further to see the screen. To prevent this put a cushion or two on your lap to support your arms and keep the device in a more elevated position.



Standing up:

Do not send text messages or use a device while walking as this could lead to serious accidents and injury.

Instead of sending a text message why not make a call instead as this is also less intensive on the muscles and tendons in your fingers.

Please remember to send your kids to <http://www.ergo4students.com> A free online resource to help us inform our children about the unhealthy use of technology and the effects of poor posture.