GETTING THE MOST OUT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY:
5 TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR
ERGONOMIC/WORKSTATION SETUP

1. Give your monitor a second look.

If your screen is planted directly on your desktop, it's time to ask management for a raise — for your computer's display. According to Dr. Jim Sheedy, director of the Vision Performance Institute at Pacific University, the **top of your the screen should be level with your eyes. The ideas is to get the eyes looking down about 10 degrees.** If it's any lower or higher, computer users will adapt to it by moving their head. If your screen is to low, your head points down, causing neck and backaches. High displays, meanwhile, contribute to dry eye syndrome.

2. Poor posture? Take it on the chin.

Poor posture is something that every office-based employee should consider throughout their day. Most people sitting at a computer get drawn into the screen, which means they crane their necks forward. This imbalance puts strain on the neck and spine. It's like holding a bowling ball with one hand; if your arm is vertical underneath, it puts less strain on the muscles, but lean that ball forward and your muscles have to compensate to keep it aloft. Sitting at a desk, that bowling ball is actually our head, so w**e recommends chin retractions, or making a double chin**, to keep the neck and spine lined up underneath.

It's probably the most effective single exercise you can do for the back and neck! Try doing 10x every 2 hours.

3. Stand up for yourself.

The modern workplace was built around the concept of sitting, but humans' ability to stand goes back millions of years. Buck the trend of the office era with a standing desk — or, if that's too radical, a sit-stand workstation. According to research out of the Mayo Clinic, sit-stand workstations helped workers replace 25 percent of their sitting time with standing up, which can increase their sense of well being and decreased their fatigue and appetite. One example, the Jarvis Desk, (http://www.ergodepot.com/Jarvis_Desk_p/jrv.htm) can go from 26-inches to 51-inches at the push of a button, lifting up to 350 pounds of whatever's on your desk.

4. Move it or lose it.

All work and no play makes Jack a bad employee. Whether it's on their phone in the bathroom or on the computer in their cube, everyone takes sanity breaks to check their Facebook or read some news. The **Pomodoro Technique** (http://pomodorotechnique.com/) even encourages this kind of behavior by breaking tasks into "pomodoros," intense 25 minute work bursts, followed by five-minute breaks. We encourage this but understand that **even 30 seconds breaks every 25-30 minutes will be very efficient**!

Named because they can be measured using little tomato-shaped kitchen timers (Pomodoro is Italian for tomato), this method lets people work intensely and stave off distraction, yet rewards them with time to goof off, as well. If you don't have a tomato timer handy, there are a lot of phone apps or online apps (http://tomato-timer.com) to keep track of your sessions. **Or simply bring any timer you may have handy from the kitchen!**

"The act of winding up the timer is a declaration of your determination to start working on the activity at hand."

5.   **Sit Poorly=Heal Poorly.**

We can't always have the best sitting position or workstation setup. However, what will give you the most bang for your buck is adequate lumbar support. A strong foundation in the core and low back will put the rest of your body in the appropriate position. Conversely, anything that makes you lose your lumbar support will inherently be worse for you; increasing the stresses on your tissue and limiting your healing potential.

Finally, here's a quick 2 minute video on maintaining a good posture on proper computer setup: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eunr6or42YM

Please don't hesitate to ask any specific questions you may have:

We encourage our patients to use their phones and take a picture of yourself at your workstation so we can give you an individualized assessment and correctives!