

NEWSLTR

A photograph of a woman with grey hair tied up, wearing a dark top and a light-colored striped apron. She is smiling and holding a large white plate filled with food, likely dumplings or small pastries. She is standing at a dining table set with several wine glasses and plates. The background shows a warm, rustic interior with wooden beams and a lamp.

the workplace wellness conference and exhibition

Remote workstations

IN THIS ISSUE

Remote worker ergonomics
What to buy - to spend
Digitizing remote workers
Ergonomic setup for remote workers

Speaker Highlight: Dr. Melissa LaMarche

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Do you purchase furniture and accessories for your remote workers or give them a stipend? In either case, function is more important than design.

Stipends are more practical because they eliminate the hassle of ordering, tracking, delivering, inventory, and complaints. Employees are free to customize based on their space, and it is easier to budget.

The downside is that left on their own accord, and without an understanding of proper ergonomics, their purchase could be, well, wasteful. Most manufacturers claim their products are ergonomically correct, but what does that mean? Ergonomics has become a meaningless word used in a sales process.

A better way of considering whether a product is beneficial is anatomically friendly. So, how do you know what is anatomically friendly?

We asked Dr. Vettrai, an ergonomic expert, what his recommendations are for the remote worker.

Comfort. No two people are alike, sizes, shapes, heights, wants, needs, my shoes won't fit your feet. So comfort is the bottom line. However, you cannot dismiss proper setup. If you cannot obtain these postures, you probably need accessories. The following is a guideline for a friendly workstation.

1. The hard palate or roof of the mouth should be parallel to the ground while keying and



the eyes are looking at the top 1/3 of the screen.

2. No bends in the wrist. There should be a straight line from your elbow to your fingertips.
3. Imagine a plumb line from the back of the ear down to the floor. That line should pass through or behind the hips. Meaning you are leaning back in your chair slightly.
4. The knees should be 0-3 inches above to 0-3 inches below the hips.

Why should the hard palate or roof of the mouth be parallel to the ground? There is a natural forward curve to the neck. Hanging the head down tractions the natural curve of the neck into an abnormal flexion posture and stresses the soft tissue. The sixty-degree sweep

of the eyes allows for viewing the entire screen. More importantly, it forces movement and increases blood flow to the intervertebral discs.

Why are there no bends in the wrist? This might be obvious to most, but ergonomic issues result from force, posture, and repetition. Two are needed to create a software tissue injury. The repetitive keying associated with awkward posture is a formula for a soft tissue injury. The general rule is do not bend a joint, any joint, more than twenty degrees if either force or repetition is added.

Why lean backward slightly when seated? Sitting at 90 degrees loads about 73% of the weight of the upper extremity to the last disc in the spine, L5/S1. Leaning progressively forward can increase the load up to 95%. Leaning back to about 110 can unload the disc down to 35%.

Why should the knees be 0-3 inches below to 0-3 inches above the hip? A quarter of the population is born with congenital abnormalities. In the spine, the most common is either a spondylolesthesis or a retrolesthesis. A spondylolesthesis is a condition where a vertebra slips forward, causing pressure on the spinal cord and surrounding soft tissue. A retrolesthesis is the opposite condition. Both are most often observed at L5/S1. To suggest a person with either of these conditions keep their legs parallel to the ground while sitting, it will be uncomfortable or painful. In both cases, it worsens the condition.



Also, pay attention to the workstation setup and placement of equipment. This is where most people make mistakes and where accessories might come in handy.

There are three zones of a workstation—primary, elbows distance from the body. Secondary, arms reach and Reference.

Everything used constantly should be in the primary or Zone 1, like the keyboard and mouse. Things used often in the secondary or Zone 2, like documents and phones that are hard-wired. Anything used periodically in the Reference, or Zone 3 where getting up to retrieve is suggested.

With a budget in mind, a tiered list of products can be displayed on-site for employees to test drive.

An example of a small budget might be an ergonomic seat support which can be purchased anywhere from \$40 on up, turning an ordinary chair into an anatomical solution. An adjustable laptop stand is another wise choice. The laptop stand should be portable, lightweight, and able to travel to a coffee shop, hotel, home office or at the office.

Footrest can be purchased if needed to position the knees in the correct plane to the hips. Be careful however anything plastic will break in short order. It is best to use a box, a book or a pillow until it is determined a footrest is necessary.

From there the world is your oyster. Sit/Stand desks, mobile units, chairs. There are products out there within budgets but most importantly follow the guidelines above, your body will thank you.

My point is that the best-designed ergonomic furniture and product(s) will only be beneficial if used properly.

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The 2024 Workplace Wellness Conference and Exhibition

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Hilton Atlanta/Marietta Hotel &
Conference Center
500 Powder Springs Road
Marietta, Ga. 30060



SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

Melissa LaMarche, DC

Dr. LaMarche is a National Board Certified Chiropractor. Her journey began in high school when she became interested in sports medicine. That interest blossomed into a passion to help people perform better and live healthier lives.

Before becoming a Doctor of Chiropractic, she worked in sports medicine, physical therapy and as a personal trainer. She holds multiple certifications in the field of human performance and sport. She has also completed post-graduate training in clinical nutrition and functional medicine.

Being healthy is one of the best things you can do for yourself. When you make a conscious effort to take care of your body, you'll not only feel better physically, but mentally and emotionally as well. You'll have more energy, improved concentration, and greater self-confidence. Plus, taking care of your health can also help prevent chronic diseases, reduce stress, and help you live a longer, happier life.

Please welcome three new sponsors this month. Be sure to visit their booth and thank them for their support.

The logo for Dyson, featuring the word "dyson" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font.The logo for weo, featuring a stylized icon of a person's head and shoulders in black and white, followed by the lowercase letters "weo" in a bold, sans-serif font.The logo for First Citizens Bank, featuring a stylized icon of a flag with red, white, and blue stripes, followed by the words "First Citizens Bank" in a blue, serif font.

Without you, there would be no show, thank you!

Don't miss the best event of the year:

The Workplace Wellness Conference and
Exhibition

thewellnessconference.org

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Are you digitizing remote employees?

You can only get home from a shopping trip or doctor's office without asking about your experience. The purpose of a survey is to obtain feedback to improve a service or product. Most people are accustomed to receiving them and don't find them annoying unless they are lengthy.

Digitizing remote employees from a wellness lens means monitoring their well-being while keeping their privacy.

Monitoring how? The posture and placement of equipment are the easiest and least threatening. Brevity is also essential. There are many tools out there, keeping in mind brevity.

Anything over 5 minutes is useless. Employees become bored and disengaged after 5 minutes—additionally, the cost of the software skyrockets. Think about the average cost of a salaried employee with benefits per hour. Multiply that by the time it takes for a survey. Some Wellness or ergonomic surveys are 30-45 minutes in length. It takes 5 minutes to acclimate to the survey and another 10-15 to get back to speed on the previous project interrupted.

For example, a sixty thousand dollar a year employee with benefits averages \$35/hour. A company with 5,000 employees equates to \$175,000 each time the company sends out the survey. Yikes!