# WORK PRACTICES

With over ½ the population spending 80% of their day sitting for prolonged periods there has been a steadfastly increase in health related problems at work, such as pain, disability, health problems, time off work, lost production, and increased health care costs.

This figure is due significantly to the advent of computers. Computers are now able to complete many of the tasks that once required leaving the desk. The body is not moving from the sitting position as often as it should, placing undue stress on the body parts. By looking at the big picture you will not only see the physical side effects of prolonged sitting, but also how it can affect your work productivity, and lead into other facets of your life.

## Making Your Work Station Safe

Adapting your workstation so that it is ergonomically sound is one of the first steps towards providing a safe working environment. Minimising the risks that might arise in and around the workstation may prevent health risks from occurring at a later date.

Computers draw on electricity to supply them with the power to operate. You may also have other electric equipment such as a modem, printer or heater that also draw from this power supply. Cables and electrical cords should be placed off the floor either by taping them to the side of the desk or placing them at the back of the desk out of the way.

To protect yourself and your computer from power surges, it is essential that a surge protector is connected to your power board. This will prevent both irregular currents of electricity damaging your computer and will stop the electricity supply if the power board is overloaded. Overloading a power board can result in electrical fires so be sure to protect yourself and others.

Larger organisations will connect surge protectors as well as an Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS). A UPS will act similarly to a generator. If the power supply is cut off the UPS will continue to supply power to your computer system. This is particularly helpful if you are working with important data that you do not want to lose.

Electrical equipment does emit a low dosage of radiation, although there are no factual figures of the exact risks which computers pose to users. It is a good idea to adhere to some of the following guidelines in order to make your workstation safe for others and yourself.

Position your monitor so that you are 1 metre from the front of the monitor. (When this is not viable, ensure that an acceptable distance is placed between you and your monitor)

Ensure that you are 2 metres from the back and sides of the monitor, especially in larger organisations where workstations are close together (back to back, right angles)

Pregnant women should take particular care of where they are positioned. Anti-radiation screens can also be fixed to the monitor to cut down the radiation emitted from the monitor.