

# Cancer Therapy Complications And Using The Computer

## Suggestions for Computer Chairs

*Adjustable chairs are essential for comfortable computer usage.*

1. The height should be adjusted so that your feet are on the floor, knees are bent at 90 degrees.
2. The seat of the chair should come out to about 2-4 inches from the back of your knees. You should not feel a lot of pressure under your thighs.
3. The arm rests should be wide and adjustable in height.
4. The back of the chair should allow for some tilt forward and back.

## Suggestions for Computer Keyboards

1. There are flexible keyboards, some split in the center, smaller keyboards without a keypad, optical keyboards. Size does matter. A too large keyboard can aggravate pain and stress the muscles by causing your hands and arms to overstretch. Find a keyboard that is comfortable for you. The higher you can place your arms in relation to the keyboard, the more advantageous.
2. Put pillows under your arms and place the keyboard on your lap.
3. Elevate the keyboard with telephone books and put pillows on your desk as arm rests.
4. If you have PBTPS or Lymphedema in one arm only, consider using the keyboard on a slant by lifting one side (your affected side) with books, pillows or foam.
5. Use bean bags of varying sizes for the underarms and as a forearm rest.
6. Cut a piece of foam at any angle that is comfortable for your particular problem. Electric knives are the easiest way to cut foam into shapes.

## Suggestions for Computer Monitors

1. Raise your monitor to eye level. You can do this simply by placing telephone books, wood blocks, or risers under the monitor. There are special devices for laptops. You do not want to be looking down.
2. You may want to invest in special computer glasses.
3. Sit up straight.
4. Do not lean on one arm to read the monitor.
5. Tuck little pillows or cotton socks filled with soft material in your armpits to help relieve pressure.
6. Check for glare.

## Suggestions for the Computer Mouse

*Mouse size and shape does matter.*

1. Don't clutch the mouse like a life preserver. Your hand should be relaxed.
2. Keep your mouse close to the keyboard. Do not

make wide circles with your arm or wrist.

3. Your wrist should lie flat or be supported by a bean bag, foam, or stuffed sock.
4. Some choose to put a pillow under their arm if they are using a mouse. Beware that an unsupported hanging elbow will create added pressure on your shoulder and may cause pain.
5. To achieve a comfortable height there are mouse platforms available, even some that fit over the number pad of a keyboard.
6. Look for a mouse that fits your hand. If you have a small hand, consider buying a mouse made for travel or children.
7. Switch the mouse from hand to hand. When using the mouse switch from using your dominant hand to your other hand. This frees your dominant hand to type on the keyboard without switching back and forth between mouse and keyboard.
8. Use keyboard shortcuts - don't use the mouse exclusively.
9. Take sporadic mouse and wrist breaks.
10. Beware of the USB (Universal Serial Bus) hump. The typical USB mouse has a higher hump in the middle of the mouse than the older PS2 mice. This hump can make hands adopt awkward positions. This may create painful hands, wrists, forearms and shoulders.
11. There are mice of all types and sizes including external touch pads, track balls, optical, foot , and head mice. A cordless gyroscopic mouse allows you to manipulate the mouse in mid-air (i.e. without having to roll it along a surface). It takes a bit of getting used to, but this aid may be particularly helpful.

## Suggestions for Computer Number Pads

1. Your hand should be relaxed, supported and at a comfortable height.
2. Check to see if the number pad in your keyboard is comfortable.
3. You may want to buy an external number pad.
4. Some choose to put a pillow under their arm if they are using a number pad. Beware the unsupported hanging elbow which will create added pressure on your shoulder and may cause pain.
5. Take hand and wrist rest breaks.

**Cancer Supportive Care**

**Fifth Dimension Therapy™**

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