

# FOCUS ON FACTS

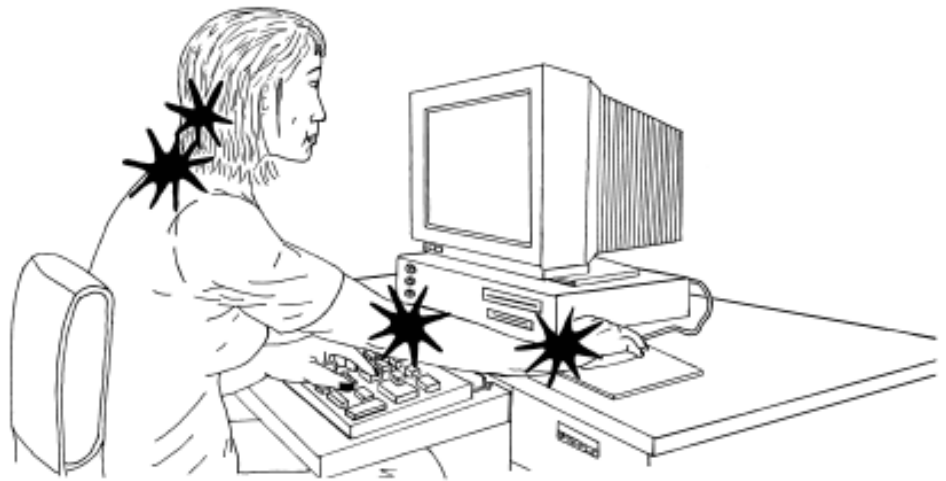
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## Mouse-related pain

Recently, injuries from using a computer mouse are getting a lot of attention. This is because we use the mouse for most computer software and often put the mouse in a poor location. The typical mouse-related injury occurs when we reach up and out to use the mouse on the desktop.

### Some Signs of a Mouse-Related Injury

- **Pain in the fingers and hand.** Sometimes you can lose individual finger control.
- **Pain in the pinkie side of the hand.** The pain may occur along the outside of the forearm to the inside of the elbow.
- **Pain in the palm and wrist.** This may be the start of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.
- **Pain around the wrist.** Sometimes it feels like a "bracelet of pain."
- **Pain in the outside of the elbow and forearm muscles.** This is sometimes



called "Tennis Elbow," whether or not playing tennis is the cause.

- **Pain at the top of the shoulder and close to the neck.** The pain may also occur between the shoulder blades.

Numbness and tingling may occur along with the pain.

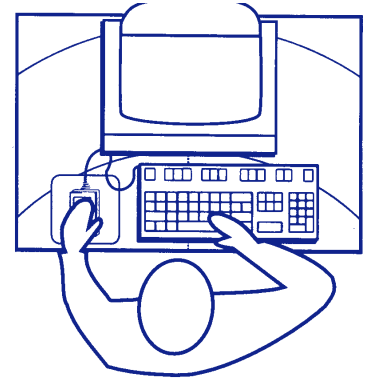
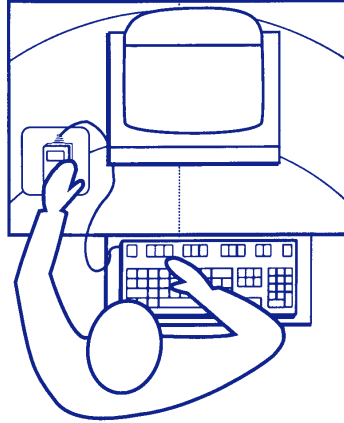
### Why Using a Mouse Can Cause Pain

Reaching up and out for the mouse often causes the pain. This reach uses the strong muscles of

the back, shoulders, and arms to hold your arm out. Eventually these muscles can get tired and sore. While the strong muscles hold your arm out, your smaller and weaker forearm and hand muscles move the mouse. These smaller muscles already work a lot when typing. When we add mousing, they too can get very tired and sore.

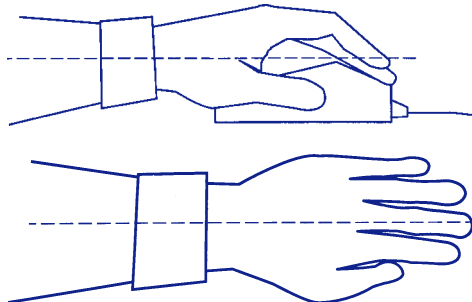
# How to Prevent Mouse-Related Pain

- **Purchase a large keyboard tray (26-30 inches) that is long enough to hold a mouse and keyboard.** If there is not enough room to use a large keyboard tray, you can place the keyboard and mouse on the desktop and raise your chair so that you can type comfortably. You may need to raise the monitor too.
- **Keep your mouse clean.** A clean mouse is easier to use because it reduces the length of time you need to grasp and lift the mouse. Find out how to clean your mouse.
- **Use a mouse that fits your hand size.** This helps to keep your hand and fingers relaxed. Mice come in many shapes and sizes, and are available in left-handed and right-handed models.
- **Try your mouse before you buy.** Comfort and function are very important considerations for a mouse. When buying any important piece of equipment, you should always give it a test run to make sure it is right for you.
- **Rest your hand when you aren't using the mouse.** By letting go of the mouse and resting your hand, you can give your muscles a break.
- **Keep your hand and wrist straight when using the mouse.** Move your mouse with your forearm and shoulder muscles. This gives your smaller hand muscles a break. Do not rest your wrist on the table or tray and operate the mouse like a windshield wiper.
- Learn alternative keyboard commands. Keying gives your mouse hand a break.



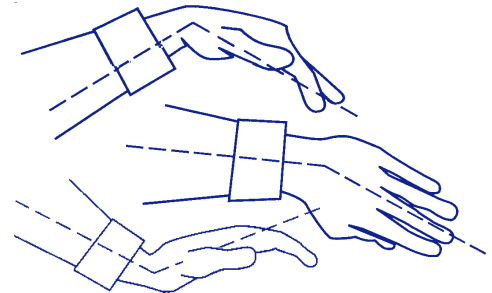
Reaching forward and out to use the mouse can lead to pain. A good way to prevent pain is to have the mouse and keyboard the same distance away from you. You can do this by getting a keyboard tray that's big enough for the mouse and keyboard, or by moving your keyboard onto your desk, and raising your chair so that you can type comfortably.

## Good hand position



*The best way to use a mouse is with a straight hand and wrist.*

## Poor hand position



*If you use a mouse with a bent wrist or hand, your hand muscles can get tired and sore very quickly.*

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