

Make Your Workplace Ergonomically Friendly

(NAPSA)—As millions of Americans spend more time at the office, a growing number are reporting increased injuries. Called repetitive stress injuries, symptoms include debilitating pain, numbness and muscle atrophy. Stress injuries stem from a wide variety of activities such as improper computer use and common tasks, such as using everyday office tools.

Nearly 600,000 employers report repetitive stress injuries that require time away from work each year. Carpal tunnel syndrome, a common repetitive stress injury, takes an average of 28 recovery days. This is longer than the time needed to recover from a bone fracture—or even an amputation.

In response to the growing problem, most large corporations now have procedures in place to identify potential hazards and assist workers in creating an “ergonomically friendly” work environment. However, this support system is often missing for employees in smaller offices.

Dr. Michael Minieka, a neurologist and ergonomics expert who helped design seven new ergonomically friendly Swingline® staplers, including the Optima™ and the Speed Grip™ staplers, says it is important to see a specialist if you are having problems.

“Many times, employees postpone receiving help because they think their problems will improve,” he said. “However, more often than not, their problems only get progressively worse and require more drastic treatment over time.”

Here are some tips to ensure your workspace is ergonomically friendly:

- Choose workspace tools designed for ease of use and comfort, such as Swingline’s new



Optima Grip™, which features a streamlined design for maximum comfort.

- Ensure your computer and monitor are positioned properly. The top of your monitor screen should be at or slightly below eye level and positioned about an arms’ length distance straight ahead.

- Wrists should remain in a neutral position.

- Rest your eyes periodically by focusing on an object 20+ feet away.

- When using office equipment for extended periods of time, ensure that the products are designed properly. For example, staplers or hole punches used for large projects should be designed for easier use and covered in soft, molded material to reduce strain. They should also require less pressure to operate.

With the right equipment that is adjusted properly for your individual use, you’ll feel more comfortable and avoid long-term injury. If you are experiencing any symptoms of repetitive strain injuries, see a doctor immediately. The sooner you diagnose and correct the condition, the better protection you’ll have against permanent problems.