

Ergonomic Guidelines for Dual Monitors

Workstations with dual monitors are useful for a variety of purposes and are becoming more common. While general ergonomic principles apply to these workstations, there are potential issues created by the additional equipment that should be addressed. Each workstation should be evaluated independently and set up to accommodate the specific tasks, needs and habits of the user. Below are some ergonomic guidelines for common setup of dual monitor workstations.

General guidelines

- Consider a keyboard tray to move the user farther away from monitor if work surface is not deep enough.
- Educate the individual to use eye movements to view the screens, in place of head and neck movements. Placing a reminder note on the monitor can help with breaking the habit.
- Position your monitor height at or slightly below eye level. The only exception is if you wear glasses with bi-focal or tri-focal lenses, then it should be lower. (The same guidelines for single monitors apply to dual monitors.)
- Place the monitors at the same height. This can be a challenge if the monitors are different sizes or have different frames.
- Where possible, use flat panel monitors with small bezel frames, which will keep the screens closer together and minimize neck rotation. Use monitors of the same size with the same resolution to minimize eyestrain.
- Adjust lighting to minimize direct glare on the monitor screen

- Consider that the space taken up by two monitors is wider than one and move other desktop items accordingly.

One monitor used the majority of the time, the other used infrequently or for intermittent reference.

- If the monitors are not used equally (i.e., one monitor used for one viewing and the other used for data input) then you may not want the gap right in front of the user and placement should be evaluated for that user's needs. Typically, the primary monitor and the keyboard should be placed directly in front of the user and the secondary monitor to the side. In general, the secondary monitor should be at about a 30 degree angle to the primary monitor, and centerline of the keyboard should be no more than 12 inches from centerline of monitor.
- If documents are used to input data, they should be placed in a document holder and positioned in line with the primary monitor or the centerline of the dual monitors, and directly in front of the keyboard. This can be a challenge when using monitor risers, especially when they are attached to the document holder and it can not be adjusted to the position needed. (See special considerations for document holders.)



Both monitors used equally

- If both are used equally, set monitors next to each other and aligned with the keyboard. Center the keyboard in front of the user.
- If documents are used to input data, they should be placed in a document holder and positioned in line with the primary monitor or the centerline of the dual monitors, and directly in front of the keyboard. This can also be a challenge when using monitor risers, or when there is inadequate space.

Special considerations for document holders



- When the monitor riser and document holder are a single unit, the unit sometimes can not be aligned properly because both monitors do not fit on the unit.
- If the height is appropriate, the platform can be extended by adding two inch monitor risers (or a ream of paper) on both sides of the platform. While this places the equipment in the correct position, it takes up space on the desktop, and other items should be moved accordingly. Alternatively, the combination unit should be removed and separate risers and document holder used.
- If different height risers are needed on each monitor, the combination unit should be removed and separate risers and document holder used.

- Where there is inadequate space on the desktop for the monitors and separate document holder consider moving other items that are in the way so that the monitors can be moved further back. This could include CPUs placed on the desktop, overhead shelves or binder bins, or desktop items.



In addition to these guidelines, all other guidelines for ergonomic setup of workstation apply. If you have questions or need assistance, contact your Safety and Health consultant, or visit www.thezenith.com.