



**Consultants in Industrial Health
Safety and Environmental Management**

What is Display Screen Equipment (DSE)?

The term DSE covers both conventional (cathode ray tube, TV-style) computer screens and the liquid crystal or plasma flat-panel displays such as those used with flat screens and laptop computers and other technologies including tablet and mobile devices.

Some users of DSE experience aches and pains in their hands, wrists, arms, neck and shoulders following long periods of DSE work. These aches and pains are often referred to as repetitive strain injury (RSI) or upper limb disorders (ULDs).

You can usually avoid these problems by ensuring you have a good workplace design, and you use the workstation correctly. You should also ensure good working practices are followed and regular short breaks from DSE are taken.

In addition, unsuitable use of DSE can lead to headaches or stress. The main reasons for this are:

- poor posture
- insufficient or no breaks from screen work
- insufficient training on new technology
- stress due to the pace of work
- glare and reflections on the screen
- use of incorrect spectacles (or lack of use).

What can you do to help yourself?

- Adjust your chair and computer screen to the most comfortable position for your work
- ensure you have sufficient work space for your documents and other equipment
- you may find a document holder helps prevent awkward neck and eye movements
- arrange your desk and screen to avoid glare and reflections
- ensure there is adequate space under your desk to move your legs freely
- avoid excess pressure from the edge of the seat on the backs of your legs - you may find a footrest beneficial
- try to keep your wrists straight when keying
- keep your mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight, and support your forearm on the desk
- sit upright and do not slouch at your desk
- change your posture as often as you can but avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need
- take regular screen breaks by changing your work activities, ie to do filing or photocopying. Frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones.



Fact Box

It is estimated that 7.5 million working days are lost due to musculoskeletal disorders caused by work, each year.

“DSE can lead to headaches or stress”

Controlling Risk

- Ensure you have a DSE risk assessment when you start work
- cooperate with your employer when measures of prevention or control have been put in place to protect you, including the use of equipment and training attendance
- report any issues you may have about your workplace or workstation layout
- if the measures put in place following assessment are not working, report it
- ask for an assessment if you experience any DSE/work station related discomfort.