

October 2: The Ergonomics of Telehealth

*Today's issue features practical information and tips about the ergonomics of telehealth based on the work of Radiologist Swati D. Deshmukh, MD, assistant professor of Radiology (Musculoskeletal Imaging), Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, and Radiologist Jeanne Horowitz, MD, vice chair for Academic and Faculty Affairs, Department of Radiology, and associate professor of Radiology (Body Imaging), Feinberg School of Medicine. Both Dr. Deshmukh and Dr. Horowitz are graduates of the **NM Scholars of Wellness Program**.*

With widespread and rapid adoption of telehealth practices, many physicians have encountered workflow changes, including increased screen time and more sedentary hours seated in front of a computer. Recognizing the similarities between the telehealth lifestyle and a diagnostic radiologist's typical day at work, Dr. Deshmukh teamed up with Dr. Horowitz to investigate the ergonomics of telehealth.

Poor ergonomics in the setting of telemedicine can lead to eye strain, neck and back pain, repetitive stress injuries of the wrist and shoulder, and headache. Optimizing workplace ergonomics is an important component of physician wellness. Combining Dr. Deshmukh's experience in musculoskeletal imaging and intervention with Dr. Horowitz's prior research on work-related injuries in the Department of Radiology, the two physicians created a guide to aid clinicians in improving the ergonomics of their telehealth practices.

To optimize telehealth workplace ergonomics and minimize work-related injuries, it's important to follow the 20-20-20 rule: take a 20-second break every 20 minutes and adjust your focus 20 feet away. The following steps are also recommended.

Optimize your posture while seated in front of a computer:

- Sit up straight, eyes at or above monitor level
- Feet flat on floor or footrest
- Arms bent with wrist and forearm rested on desk
- Legs at 90 degrees (knees level with hips)

Prevent digital eye strain:

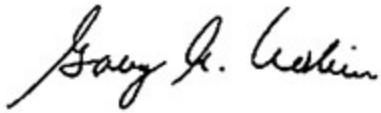
- Clean screen regularly to minimize glare
- Use proper lighting
- Consider blue-light blocking glasses
- Blink often and take breaks

Stretch periodically to decrease fatigue and prevent injury:

- Back extension
- Neck and shoulder rolls
- Arm and wrist rolls
- Quad and ankle stretches

For additional physician wellness resources, please visit the [Physician Well-Being page](#) on Physician Forum.

Thank you to all NM physicians and clinicians for your ongoing commitment, collaboration and leadership in providing exceptional *Patients First* care.



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