

The open angle advantage

By [Dawn Jacobs](#), Senior Safety Management Consultant

“How do I know which seated neutral posture to recommend?” is a common question for new ergonomic assessors. It is an excellent question and the answer is – it depends! We are unique individuals with different statures, habits, needs, and preferences. With that said, the open angle posture is highly recommended over the 90/90/90 and Grandjean, in most cases.

The 90-90-90 posture, named after the right angles of the elbows, hips, and knees, was long accepted as the proper seated posture; however, modern studies suggest less pressure is exerted on the spine and the spine’s natural curvature is better

maintained when the hips and knees are positioned at a greater angle. In the open angle position (shown below), knees are positioned lower than hips, creating angles of approximately 120°. Fun fact: the open angle neutral posture was born from studying astronauts floating in microgravity. It is also the position our body naturally assumes when free floating in water.

Remember – there is no absolute posture that is perfect for an eight-hour day. We must frequently adjust our position and take routine breaks to ultimately reduce the stresses of extended sitting.



PROS

- Weight is distributed between feet, thighs, and abdomen.
 - Reduces weight load on the lumbar spine, alleviating low back discomfort
 - Natural spinal curvature is maintained.
 - Discourages leg crossing
- Creates more leg room below keyboard tray
- Downward slope of the forearms and hands promotes neutral wrists.

CONS

- Slight tilt of the seat pan may initially feel awkward.
Tip: Gradually ease into the tilt.

Upcoming ergonomics assessor trainings

Basic ergo assessor

September 21, 2016 | Salem
November 16, 2016 | Salem

For locations and to register online, visit saif.com

Online resources

[State of Oregon Office Ergonomic Consensus Guidelines](#)

[Oregon OSHA Ergonomics Publications](#)

[OSHA.gov Computer Workstations eTool](#)

[SAIF Corporation Safety Topics](#)

Office ergonomics assessor worksheet

www.saif.com/Documents/Employer/trainings/S960_Ergo_Assessment_ff.pdf

Recent ergo assessor graduates

Congratulations to the following employees who completed their required assessments for Office Ergonomic Assessor certification.

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