

In Case You Haven't 'HERD' About...

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Simplifying Ergonomics: Microbreaks in the Office

TWO COMMON health risk factors in the office are glare from computer screens and repetitive motions from common tasks such as filing, filling envelopes, typing etc. Microbreaks have been used as a solution to both problems. Having many short breaks throughout the work day can be more beneficial than 2-3 long breaks.



Eye strain risks come from staring at a computer screen from hours on end.

When filling in that spreadsheet or writing that important email, try to remember to take short breaks from staring at the screen. The **20-20-20 rule** is a catchy way to help you remember this.

It simply states – Every 20 minutes, take a 20 second break, and look at something 20 feet away. You may have to look out a window or your office area to achieve the distance. For a next step while taking that 20 second break perform 5-10 slow blinks (think of the way your eyes close when you are struggling to stay awake). **Avoid looking at smartphones and tablets during these 20 seconds.** Finally, for those new to Tufts, familiarize yourself with exit routes, fire extinguisher locations, first aid kits and other applicable Fire and Life Safety items during this “microbreak for the eyes.”

For general work: filing, mailing, sorting, there's a simpler rule: The **30-30-30 rule**.

Every 30 minutes take a 30 second break and do this for 30 days.

What to do during these 30 second Microbreaks:

- Stretch (Discuss applicable stretches for you with a medical professional)
- Grab a glass of water
- Change tasks, do some quick cleaning during a 30 second microbreak from filling envelopes
- Convert your sit/stand workstation to the alternative position

Contact your Campus EHS Manager if you have any other concerns with ergonomic issues.



This worker could stretch every 30 minutes or perform another task such as replenishing materials for mailings.

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