Computer Mouse – Location – Between Keyboard and Operator – Fact Sheets



IS THE SPACE TO THE RIGHT OF THE KEYBOARD THE ONLY ONE SUITABLE FOR A COMPUTER MOUSE?

Since there isn’t always a lot of space on other areas of the desk, most computer workstations have the mouse at the right hand of the keyboard (or the left hand, for left-handed people). While putting the mouse here can be made more comfortable by using a mouse platform or a narrower keyboard, there is another choice: you can also put the mouse between yourself and the keyboard. There are two ways of doing this: one is using a keyboard with a touch pad, and the other is by placing a separate mouse just in front of you, between you and the keyboard.

What’s a keyboard with a touch pad? And how can it be more comfortable for mouse users?

There are many keyboards which have a touch pad, a small rectangular pad at the front of the keyboard which works like a mouse. The touch pad allows you to move your finger as though it were a cursor. While the touch pad is not as precise as a ‘proper’ mouse, it works a lot like one and can be used for most common computer applications, such as word processing. Because it’s positioned directly in front of you, you don’t have to reach as far or as awkwardly as with a traditionally placed mouse. This placement reduced the risk of developing aches and pains associated with working in awkward positions.

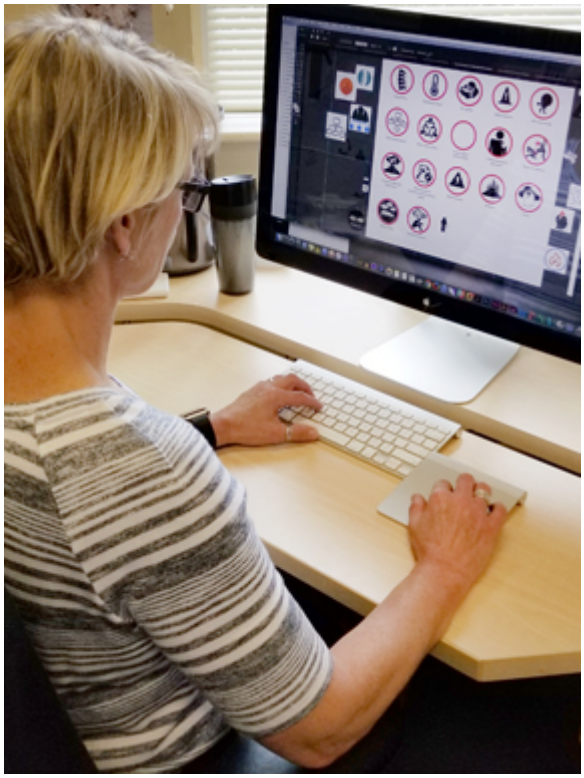


Figure 1

How can placing a traditional computer mouse between the computer operator and the keyboard make things more comfortable and safe?

Placing a computer mouse between you – the computer operator – and your keyboard can greatly improve your working posture, because you don't have to reach as far or as awkwardly as you would if the mouse were positioned to your right (or left). By putting the mouse directly in front of you, you are more balanced, supported, and comfortable, so you will feel less muscle fatigue, discomfort, and will also reduce the risk for injuries (e.g., work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs)).



Figure 2

So that the mouse can be easily operated in front of you, a cordless mouse is

essential. It may be necessary to remove the arms of your chair so you can pull your chair towards your desk – as close as possible – to reduce reaching and overstretching your arms while typing. All this said, this recommendation might not suit everyone: heavy set individuals or people with shorter than average arms may not find this arrangement as comfortable.

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