Use Available Tools
Shortcuts, keystrokes and custom settings can be helpful in reducing your workload.

- **Customize** settings. The size, speed, and response of the pointer can be controlled for efficient operation.
- **Avoid overshooting your target.** Slow down the response speed if necessary.
- **Incorporate keyboard shortcuts or alternatives into your work techniques.** The following are some commonly used shortcuts:
  - F1 (Help)
  - Alt (Activate the menu bar)
  - Esc (Close a drop-down list box or dialog box)
  - Ctrl-A (Select all)
  - Ctrl-P (Print)
  - Ctrl-S (Save)
  - Alt-Tab (Move between active screens)

Work Smart
Limit the use of the pointing device as much as possible.

- **The best remedy for a pointing device injury is rest.**
- **Take short 1 to 2 minute stretch breaks every 20-30 minutes.**
- **Change positions frequently when working.**
- **Use good posture.**

How Do I Get Help?
Contact the Industrial Hygiene Division at Environment, Health & Safety:

Visit our website at [http://blink.ucsd.edu/go/ergo](http://blink.ucsd.edu/go/ergo)
OR send email to EHSIH@ucsd.edu

Source Materials: UCLA Environment, Health & Safety, Ergonomics Program
Illustrations: Liz Fraeger
Web surfing and computer software have resulted in prolonged or repetitive use of pointing devices such as mice and trackballs. Upper extremity, shoulder and back discomfort can result from improper or prolonged use of these devices. Here are some tips to prevent problems.

Tip: Keep it close

Keep your pointing device close to your keyboard to avoid long reaches.

- Select a keyboard tray large enough for your keyboard and pointing device.
- Position the pointer at the same level as your keyboard. Avoid reaching over the keyboard to use your mouse.
- Elevate the pointer with a small pad or book to reduce shoulder discomfort.
- Consider using a mousebridge to position your mouse over your 10-key pad, if unused.

Tip: Use good posture

Sit with your back supported against the backrest of your chair. Awkward postures are a major cause of discomfort when using a pointing device.

- Work with your shoulder relaxed.
- Keep your arm close by your side.
- Hold your elbow at a 100° to 110° angle.
- Keep your wrist in a straight or neutral position.
- Lightly supporting your forearm on your armrest or desk can help you keep your shoulder relaxed.

Tip: Use good technique

Use your hand, wrist and forearm as a unit. Your wrist and hand should work as an extension of your forearm.

- Do not twist or move your wrist from side to side or up and down when working.
- Keep your hand relaxed. Do not hold your pointing device with a tight grip.
- When not using the pointing device, let it go.
- Keep your fingers relaxed. Do not hold your fingers above the activation buttons when using the pointing device.
- Keep your thumb relaxed. Do not keep your thumb in a bent position when using the pointer.
- Avoid excessive thumb movements to operate a track ball. Use your fingers to spread the workload.
- Consider alternating hands if you are a high volume user. But, use caution when switching hands and make sure the device is made for the hand you are using. Give yourself time to get used to the change.

Tip: Select the right device

- Select a pointing device that is the right size and shape for your hand. It should fit comfortably in the palm of your hand.
- Use a pointer with a scroll button option if you scroll frequently (especially if you are a web surfer).
- Try using a trackball if you have shoulder discomfort when using a mouse. A trackball reduces the need to use shoulder movements but can result in thumb or finger discomfort if not used properly.