Misperceptions

- These days everyone uses video display terminals (VDTs) to transmit, receive, and process information.
- VDT use has been accompanied by worker health concerns regarding radiation hazards, eyestrain, muscular stiffness, fatigue, and stress.
- Research has explored the health and safety implications of VDT usage and found no radiation hazard exists.
- The radiation level emitted by VDTs is minor when compared with diagnostic medical equipment, TV sets, FM radio waves, and the natural environment.
- Research has also shown that VDTs pose no direct health hazards to pregnant women or their unborn children.
- Health concerns regarding VDT usage include eyestrain, muscular fatigue, and psychological stress.

User Guidelines

- Proper lighting and frequent work breaks will greatly reduce or eliminate eye fatigue.
- Control glare by placing VDTs parallel to windows as well as parallel to and between lights.
- Anti-glare screens also reduce eye strain.
- VDT workers should take a break every two hours of steady work.
- Eyestrain is compounded by the fact that many people have some uncorrected eye disorder, so regular vision tests should be part of a VDT user's medical program.

VDT Positioning

- Proper positioning reduces muscular fatigue.
- The VDT should be placed directly in front of the operator (18-20 inches away) at eye-level height.
- Ideal working posture should permit a 90 degree angle between the upper and lower arms leaving the forearms horizontal.
- A footrest elevating the feel slightly is helpful.
- Psychological stress can be reduced if proper VDT training and education is provided for the worker.
- Employers can also reduce VDT related stress by periodically interrupting a user's work with tasks that involve movement about the office.
- See Comfortable Computing.