



# DSE CASE STUDIES

**Posture** • noun **1** a particular position of the body. **2** the way in which a person holds their body. **3** an approach or attitude towards something.

## DSE Assessments

Having never had a DSE assessment before (in a work history spanning 15 years) I did wonder what difference it would make, especially as I was fortunate enough not to be suffering from any persistent symptoms. At the end of my first assessment I was soon provided with a foot rest, wrist rest and document holder, all of which have made my working day since then much more comfortable. I also acquired some useful knowledge particularly concerning varying my workload, especially with routine and repetitive tasks and the need to take short breaks. Having the opportunity to consider and review the position of your body and working practices was of benefit and did make me realise how many niggles, aches and pains I had shrugged off in the past. Even simple things like moving small items i.e. the telephone and storage files, made a difference which I would not have considered changing if there hadn't been a specific mechanism for reflection despite being the obvious thing to do.

Over a period of four years I have changed jobs three times within the organisation and had a total of five desk moves, therefore the annual re-assessment process has also been helpful even after applying learned DSE principles, especially as some workstations are not ideal and further advice was welcome. I have also been able to adapt this knowledge outside of work having spent the last year doing computer based courses at evening class and practicing various tasks at home. This extra activity on top of my normal working day, if not properly managed could easily have increased the risk of upper body, wrist and eye strain. Sarah Poole NHS East Midlands

Before I found out I was pregnant I had my regular workstation assessment, once I had informed HR my assessments became more frequent - every month. Diane asked how I was feeling, any aches and pains and any improvements that I could make in making me feel more comfortable (even if I did look like a weeble towards the end). I even had a mini neck message from Diane after I complained about my neck hurting on a few of the assessments.

When I returned to work after my maternity leave I received another assessment and Diane took the time to ask about my family. I got to know Diane professionally and personally and enjoyed my "monthly" visits.

Kate - NHS East Midlands

**Sitting Positions** - Regardless of how good your working posture is, working in the same posture or sitting still for prolonged periods is not healthy. You should change your working position frequently throughout the day in the following ways:

- Make small adjustments to your chair or backrest.
- Stretch your fingers, hands, arms, and torso.
- Stand up and walk around for a few minutes periodically.

I found these assessments very useful for the following reason. I used to wear contact lenses and was having a lot of problems with irritation and conjunctivitis. Following a consultation with my optician, I was told that the problem could have something to do with looking at a computer screen for long periods of time. I had a DSE Assessment which advised that I should take regular breaks, drink plenty of water and if possible use a desk top humidifier which would help with the irritation. I followed up on this which helped to improve my condition which in turn allowed me to be accepted onto a laser treatment scheme and I had an operation on my eyes and now have perfect vision. I no longer have to wear contact lenses or glasses. I understand that I must still follow the advice given from my DSE Assessor but hopefully, I will not encounter these problems to the extent that I was doing.

I believe it is important that we continue these assessments as we all spend a lot of time at our computers and do not realise the health problems we can experience. I think everyone should be made aware of the correct way to sit and use a computer so they do not develop any long term problems.

Claire Fallon—NHS East Midlands