

OFFICE DESIGN

& ERGONOMICS SURVEY 2020

We asked HR professionals how they help reduce ergonomic-related injuries.

THIS IS WHAT THEY SAID.

Presented by

HR Daily Advisor & **ergotron**



ABOUT THIS REPORT

One important aspect of improving the workplace environment that is often overlooked is office design. Changes to office and workstation design can not only make for a more pleasant and inviting workplace but also guard against complaints of employee discomfort and even costly work-related injuries.



In our “Office Design & Ergonomics Survey,” more than 570 managers, company executives, supervisors and human resources professionals shared what changes they implemented in their offices and workstations to positively impact the employee experience and help reduce ergonomic-related injuries.

WHO OWNS OFFICE DESIGN?

35% Said executive teams were the driving force behind the design of the offices respondents currently work in.

25% Said facilities were the driving force behind the design of the offices respondents currently work in.

4% Said HR was solely responsible for office design.

18%

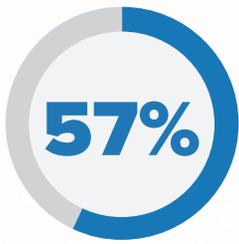
Answered "Other." Many identified architects and design companies such as interior designers. Others credited their organization's owners and identified joint efforts between HR and facilities or between HR and managers.

BACKGROUND

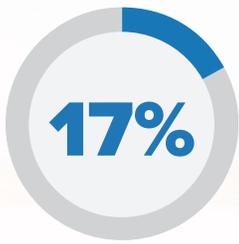
As background for the offices where our respondents work, more than two-thirds (68%) said their organizations had been in their current location for five years or more, and more than half (51%) said they had been in their current location for 10 years or more.

Meanwhile, more than half of respondents (55%) said they owned, rather than rented, their office space or building, indicating greater autonomy when it comes to implementing structural versus cosmetic changes to office design.

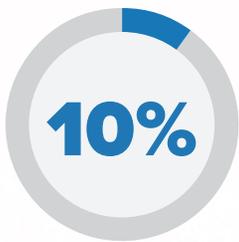
WHO CAN MAKE CHANGES TO **OFFICE DESIGN**?



Said the executive team has the decision making power to change office design.



Said that facilities had the decision making power to change office design.



Said that HR had the decision making power.



Said "Other" noting that these were a shared responsibility among all three groups: HR, facilities and executives. Some said it was business owners.

BUDGETS

31% Said they had an actual budget for making changes or improving office design.

42% Reported they had no such budget.

27% Indicated they were not sure.

There were several indicators that many survey respondents came from inclusive cultures. One of these encouraging indicators was their response to a question regarding their organization's level of interest in employee input:

ORGANIZATIONS ARE LISTENING TO EMPLOYEE INPUT AND **TAKING ACTION**

45%

Said "Yes" when asked if they ever solicited feedback on office design.

44%

Said "No" when asked if they ever solicited feedback on office design.

87%

Reported that their organizations implemented changes based on employee feedback.

9%

Indicated that their organizations did not implement changes based on employee feedback.

MOST POPULAR OFFICE DESIGN CHOICES

When asked if they had ever implemented any changes to improve office design to make it more comfortable or safe, an impressive 78% of respondents said their organizations had done so.

The most common changes or improvements regarded office furniture—70% reported they had changed office furniture, and 57% said they had rearranged it. Reducing clutter (57%) was another improvement identified by the majority of respondents whose organizations had made changes, as was improving lighting (56%). Other popular changes were adjusting temperature (45%) and changes to office space or building colors (40%).



70% Changed office furniture.



56% Improved office lighting.



57% Re-arranged office furniture.



45% Adjusted office temperature.



57% Reduced office clutter.



40% Changed office space or building colors.

Aside from past changes, respondents were asked whether they were currently considering making any changes to office design. 30% shared that they were considering such changes now.

INDIVIDUAL WORKSTATION DESIGN CHANGES

The survey's focus shifted from changes to the office space as a whole to individual workstation design. Respondents were asked whether their organizations had a budget for making changes to or improving workplace design. Similar to the results for office design, just 30% said they had such a budget, with 45% reporting they did not.

However, 70% of respondents said they had made past changes to improve workstations to make them more comfortable or safe. As seen below, providing a standing desk option was the most frequently implemented improvement. Other improvements cited by more than half of respondents included a chair that meets the individual's body requirements (64%) and providing keyboard trays (51%). The addition of anti-fatigue mats (35%), document holders (33%), and monitor arms (30%) was also popular to help ensure safety or comfort.

69%

Were provided standing desks.

35%

Were given anti-fatigue mats.

64%

Were given chairs for individual body requirements.

33%

Were provided document holders.

51%

Were provided keyboard trays.

30%

Were given monitor arms.

Meanwhile, nearly one in four (24%) respondents were currently considering making these types of changes to workstation design.



ERGONOMIC-RELATED INJURY DATA

Respondents were asked if they were keeping track of employee reports of repetitive stress injuries or musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Tracking these reports can make an employer aware of potential ergonomic-related red flags regarding employee workstations. It was encouraging to see that the majority of respondents (59%) said they did keep track of reports of repetitive stress injuries or MSDs, but it was equally concerning that nearly three out of 10 (29%) didn't and that another 12% weren't sure.

59% Kept track of reports of repetitive stress injuries or MSDs.

29% Did not keep track of reports of repetitive stress injuries or MSDs.

12% Were not sure if they did or did not keep track of such injuries.

MOST COMMON PAIN AND INJURY COMPLAINTS

30% Neck & Shoulder

25% Back

16% Carpal Tunnel

11% Headache

9% Eye Strain

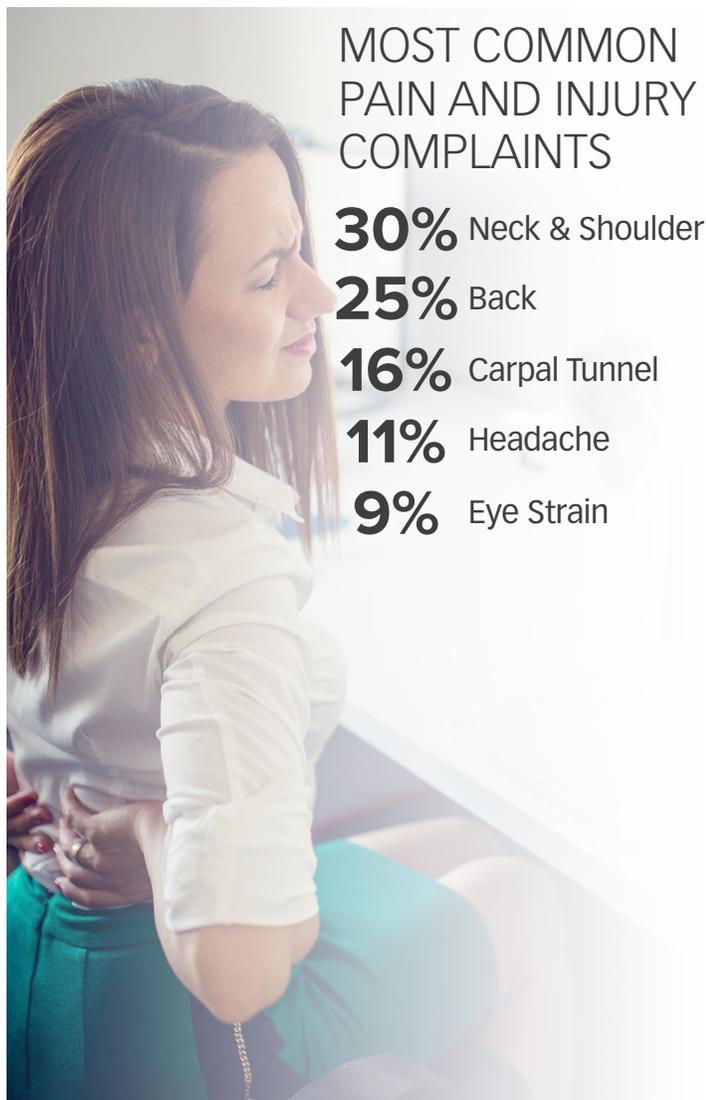
REPORTS OF REPETITIVE STRESS INJURIES AND MSDS

78% Received one or two reports of repetitive stress injuries or MSD's in the past 12 months.

14% Received 3-5 reports in the past 12 months.

5% Received 3-5 reports in the past 12 months.

3% Received 11 or more reports in the past 12 months.



EMPLOYERS BECOMING MORE PROACTIVE ON **ERGONOMIC**

Promising findings came in response to the question of whether employers seem to be more concerned about ergonomic issues than in the past when asked “Is your organization more proactive regarding ergonomic issues compared to five years ago?”

4%

“Less proactive” than five years ago.

33%

“About the same” proactivity as five years ago.

63%

“Much more” or “somewhat more” proactive than five years ago.

This indicates that organizations recognize the seriousness of these issues and their impact on worker health and productivity.

ADEQUATE BREAKS AND UNDERSTANDING ERGONOMICS

90%

Reported that their managers allowed employees to take adequate breaks and encouraged them to switch positions to help avoid pain or injury.

Another check in the “win” column for ergonomic practices—and for good employer practices in general—was respondents’ answers regarding whether their company’s manager allowed employees to take adequate breaks and encouraged them to switch positions (to help avoid pain or injury). An overwhelming majority—90%—reported that managers did allow these breaks and encouraged changes in body position.

More encouraging news came from responses related to internal organizational knowledge about ergonomics. When respondents were asked whether they understood the key elements of an ergonomically fit workstation, eight out of 10 said they did. But is this knowledge being applied to determine whether workstations are ergonomically fit? According to our findings, not necessarily. When asked if they conducted ergonomic assessments of their workstations, 60% of our respondents said they did not.

80%

Understood key elements of an ergonomically fit workstation.

60%

Do not conduct ergonomic assessments of their workstations.



DEDICATED PERSONNEL AND ERGONOMIC TRAINING

Just 35% said they had dedicated personnel to address ergonomics in their organization. Less than one-third of respondents said their organization conducts ergonomics training—such as monitor, keyboard, and mouse positioning and proper body posture—among employees.

35% Have dedicated personnel to address ergonomics in their organization.

60% Of those who conduct training have it once a year.

29% Of those who conduct training do it every two or three years.

11% Of those who conduct training conduct it more than once per year.

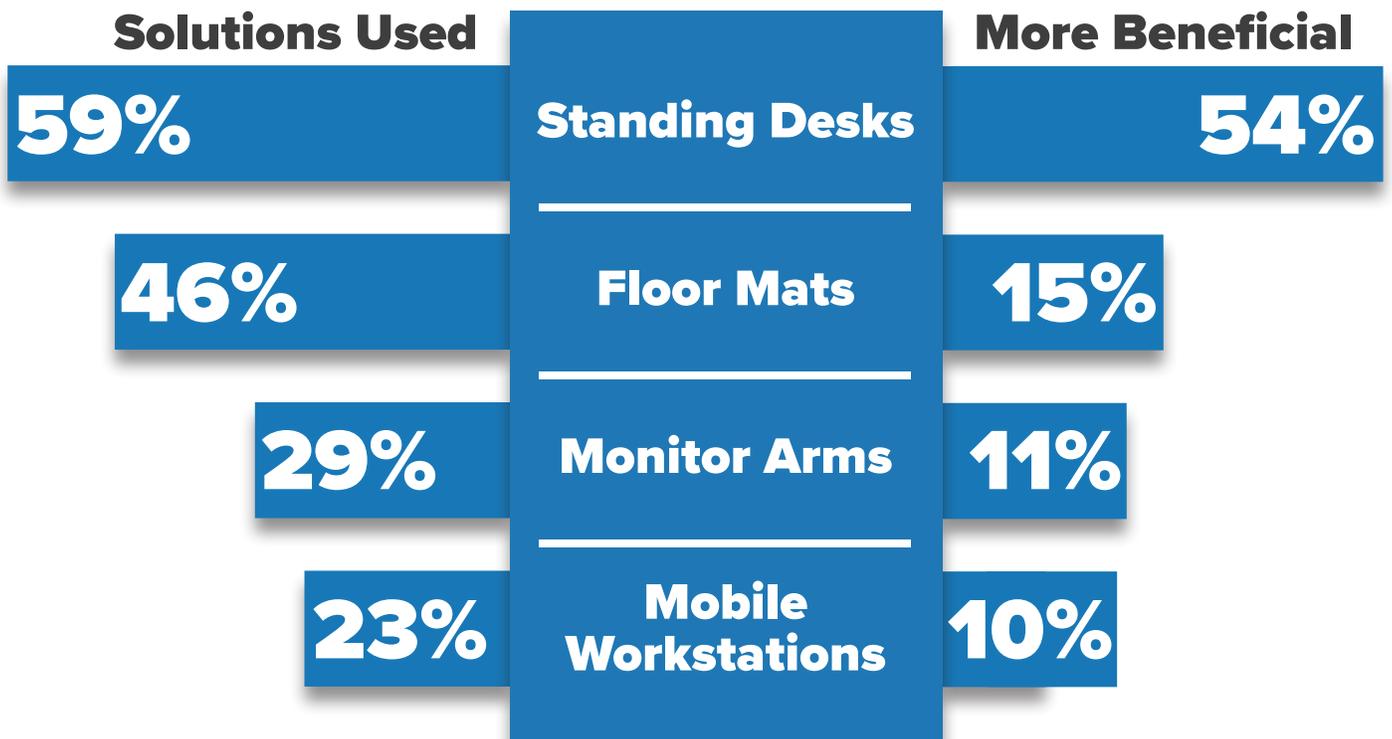
While it appears that most respondents' organizations are supporting their employees' health by allowing for breaks and implementing improvements, they are missing out on opportunities to help prevent ergonomic-related pain and injury through training.

For the 32% who reported they conduct ergonomics training, most (60%) said the training is typically held once per year, while 29% said it's conducted every two to three years. Only 11% of respondents who conduct ergonomics training conduct it more than once per year.

SUPPORTING COMFORT WITH ERGONOMIC SOLUTIONS

When asked about which solutions respondents currently use to reduce or eliminate repetitive stress injuries or MSDs, the most common answer was again the use of standing desks, cited by 59% of respondents. The second most common solution was the addition of floor mats (46%), followed by monitor arms (29%) and mobile workstations (23%). Some common "Other" responses included sitting/exercise balls and wrist guards.

When asked to identify which of these solutions has been the most beneficial in terms of reducing ergonomic-related pains or injuries, standing desks were again the most popular answer by a wide margin at 54%, followed by floor mats (15%), monitor arms (11%), and mobile workstations (10%).



Meanwhile, nearly half (48%) of all survey respondents said they currently had an individual workstation that allowed them to change their position from sitting to standing. Clearly, many respondents recognized the benefits of having this option available for their own individual workstations. The popularity and prevalence of standing desks were the most revealing takeaways from the survey.

REMOTE WORKER **NEEDS**

Finally, the survey addressed the needs of remote workers by asking whether respondents receive requests from off-site workers for specific accommodations or equipment. Just 29% of respondents said they'd received such requests, which calls into question if most remote workers are aware that asking for solutions that might reduce or prevent pain or injuries is an option.



29% Received requests from off-site workers for specific accommodations or equipment.



41% Said their organizations took the time to conduct "house calls" for an ergonomic assessment or to address a solution.

Those few respondents who said they did receive such requests were asked if anyone from the organization visits the off-site workspaces to conduct an ergonomics assessment or determine the best solution. Considering that many remote workers live a significant distance from their employer, it was impressive to see that 41% of respondents said their organizations have taken the time and effort to conduct "house calls" in these situations. More than half (56%) of that same pool of respondents said they provided ergonomic solutions for remote workers.

FINAL **THOUGHTS**

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), 1.8 million workers report MSDs each year, and about 600,000 of those workers need to take time off work because of those injuries. Moreover, MSD cases account for 33% of all worker injury and illness cases. By conducting audits of and implementing ergonomics solutions in your office—particularly individual employee workstations—to reduce repetitive stress injuries and MSDs, you not only convey your care and concern for employees as individuals but also avoid considerable costs in terms of lost productivity and absences.

ABOUT **ERGOTRON**

Ergotron uses movement to improve how people work, learn, play and care for others. With a focus on healthcare, education, general office and custom solutions, we rely on human-centered design principles and the technology of movement to build environments that help people thrive. Our products remove limitations to support healthier, more productive environments for life and work. Ergotron is moving you forward.

Award-winning, professional-grade designs

ergotron
moving you forward



For more ergonomic tips, visit www.cdw.ergotron.com/ergonomics