No-cost computer tips for avoiding RSI

Run *Control Panel from Task Bar /Start /Settings /Control Panel.* The settings given are correct for Windows 98 and Word 2000. They are offered as suggestions only - experiment with the settings to suit you. **Macintosh users** should consult our factsheet, *Apple Macintosh Shortcut Keys and Tips*.

1. Make the mouse easier to use

a) Slow your mouse down
Slowing down your mouse greatly reduces muscle tension in your hand
1. In *Control Panel* double-click on *Mouse*
2. Select the tab *Pointer Options*
3. Under *Pointer Speed* move the slider left to *Slow*
4. Click *OK*
5.

You may also find it helpful to increase the interval between clicks when double-clicking.

b) Reduce the number of clicks

From the **Tools** menu at the top of any window, choose 'Folder Options'. On the 'General' tab, locate 'Click items as follows' and choose 'Single click to open an item (point to select)'. After making this change, you'll find that items highlight when you point at them (no need to click), and you only have to click once to open a folder or document. This may require a little time to get used to. You can choose to have all icon names underlined (like web browser links), or underlined only when you point at them.

There used to be a free program called **Mousetool**, which could simulate a click when the user moved the cursor over an icon, but this is now a commercial product, **Quill Nib**. Visit www.mousetool.com for an update.

2. Avoid using the mouse as much as possible

a) Keyboard shortcuts
You don't have to use the mouse to navigate and execute commands in Windows. For a full list of keyboard shortcuts see our factsheet *Windows shortcut keys*. To show shortcut keys for windows programmes, got to *View/Toolbars/Customise/Options* and click on s*how shortcut tips in screen tips*.
Windows was designed to be an intuitive and easy to use interface, i.e. if you want to do something, using the mouse to point at a picture of it on the screen doesn't need a lot of explanation. However, although it takes a bit of time to learn the shortcuts, using them does speed up work considerably, and avoids the discomfort that can be associated with mouse work.

b) Mouse keys

If you really can't do without using the pointer, try switching on **'Mouse keys'**. Go to *Ctrl Panel*, choose *Accessibility Options* then click the tab for *Mouse*. Tick the box for *Mouse Keys*. This will allow you to move the pointer with the arrow keys on the number pad. You will need to make sure your pointer speed is set quite fast for this (see point 1a).

3. Adjust your screen

This allows you to fit far more information on your screen. N.B. Before changing monitor settings check with your IT department or IT support service for monitor compatibility.

1. In *Control Panel* double-click on *Display*
2. Select *Settings*
3. Under *Screen Area* move the slider to the right to *800 by 600.* (If you have a 17 inch screen try *1024 by 768 pixels)*
4. Press *Apply* to test. If test is successful keep new setting
5. Now staying on the *Settings* tab, press the *Advanced* button.
6. Select the *Adapter* tab. Change the *Refresh* frequency to 70-75 Hz or higher (remembering to check with your IT dept or IT support service for monitor compatibility).
7. Re-adjust size and shape of screen using monitor controls (usually found on the front of the monitor itself).
8. Is text too small? Leave the Adapter tab and choose the General tab. Then under *Font Size* choose *Large Fonts*
9. Click *OK.*

4. Adjust your keyboard

a) Slow your repeat rate down

Avoid mistakes that you then have to go back and correct…

1. In *Control Panel* double-click on *Keyboard*
2. Set *Repeat delay – long*, *Repeat rate – slow*.

b) Sticky keys

Some people find having to hold shift down while pressing another key awkward. Go to ctrl panel, choose Accessibility Options and on the Keyboard tab tick the box marked 'Sticky Keys'. This will mean that to type the word 'The' you would type 'SHIFT-t-h-e' rather than 'SHIFT+t-h-e'.

5. Avoid unnecessary keystrokes

a) Auto-correct

Word can automatically correct errors you make. But did you know you can also use this feature as a shortcut to inserting phrases and paragraphs you type frequently?

Go to tools. Choose Autocorrect. The first tab you see open in front of you contains a list of commonly used spelling mistakes and typos. Beside them are substitutions that Word will automatically make. Make sure that the box 'replace text as you type' is ticked. You can add any common mistakes that you make.
You can also add commonly used phrases and assign them a shortcut.

So for example, you can input that 'sig' is an error and should be replaced with the following phrase:

If you have any more questions do not hesitate to call us on 023 8058 4314

Yours sincerely

Deirdre Rusling
Information Officer'

b) Predictive text

This guesses what you are about to type, saving you unnecessary keystrokes.
Go to tools. Choose Autocorrect. Then choose the tab Autotext. You will see a list of commonly used phrases like yours sincerely, best wishes and so on. You can add your own commonly used phrases such as your name, the name of your organisation or department or any sentences or long jargon you use frequently. When you are writing a document, if the computer recognises that you have typed the first few letters of the given phrase, it will suggest the phrase in a box. Just hit return to accept the phrase or carry on typing to reject it.

In summary...

Basically don't use the mouse if you can type and don't type if you can possibly avoid it…

For more information and suggestions for DOS/Windows 3.11, call AbilityNet on 0800 269545.