



The right posture for gaming

Whilst you're playing your favourite game, you might be thinking about any number of things. You might be concentrating completely on predicting where your opponent is going to move next, so you can intercept and shoot them. You might be thinking about positioning your zealots on your base's ramp in order to prevent a pack of zerglings rushing in and killing all of your probes. You might simply be total immersed in the beauty of a story that's unfolding in front of your eyes.

What you're unlikely to be terribly concerned about is your posture – that is, until you come to the point when your posture becomes impossible to ignore, because it's causing you crippling pain. In order to prevent this from happening, it's important to practice sitting correctly. Like any habit, good posture is something which will come naturally only if it's practiced regularly. In this article, we'll examine how one should sit at one's gaming machine, in order to ensure that you're able to enjoy your favourite games long into the future – without suffering the slightest discomfort from doing so.

1. Sit up straight

The advice offered by school teachers across the country holds true – slouching is almost guaranteed to produce back pain sooner or later. Push your hips as far back into your chair as possible, and adjust the height of your chair so that both of your feet are flat against the floor. Your knees should be just a few inches lower than your hips, and your back should be supported.

Depending on the chair you're using, this might not be possible. Enlist the aid of cushions and small pillows to support your back and your rear end, and ensure that your posture is as straight as can be.

2. Position your keyboard

You'll want to ensure that you're able to reach your keyboard without overextending. Even the slightest reach, if it's maintained for a five-hour session of League of Legends, is likely to translate to injury in the long-term.

Position your keyboard so that you can easily reach it. It should be as close as possible, and directly parallel to your chest. Ideally, you'll want your elbows to be close to your side – though they needn't be glued there.

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Of course, the exact optimal position of your keyboard will depend on the sort of game you're playing. If the fingers of your left hand are glued permanently to the W,A,S, and D keys, then you might want to shift your keyboard a little further to the left.

Your keyboard will probably come with plastic legs on the underside. These can be used to adjust the tilt. If you're moving your fingers while your hands are tilted back, then you'll be stretching the tendons far more. So adjust the tilt so that you can maintain straight wrists as you're typing. You might consider 'wrist rests' designed to cushion your wrists against the hard surface of your desk – but if your posture is correct, these shouldn't be necessary.

3. Position your monitor

In order to retain an upright posture, you'll want to put the top of your monitor at eye level. If you've got an enormous monitor, this might be easy – but if you haven't, then consider placing some object, like a stack of unwanted books, underneath it. While we're gaming, we might want the screen to encompass our entire field of vision. But from the point of view of our long-term health, it's best to sit at least eighteen inches from the screen. Adjust the brightness so that you're not blinded every time the HDR lighting kicks in, and be sure that the ambient lighting in the room is enough so that you're not sitting in total darkness – if you notice any glare, then adjust the angle of your monitor, and the nearby lighting, accordingly.

4. Take regular breaks

A good game can be a very absorbing thing. The best might compel you to return to them compulsively for hours on end and long into the night, endangering your career and your domestic and social life. It's important to be aware of this, and occasionally take a break. Every thirty minutes, take a break for around five minutes to do something else. You might, in between bouts of a multiplayer game, retire to the kitchen to make a cup of tea. This will give you a chance to stretch your shoulders – and it'll help you to refocus your eyes on something that isn't a screen for a moment, too.



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