



Environmental Health & Safety
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Treadmill Desk Workstation Guidelines for Employees and Supervisors

Initial approval and continued participation and utilization of a Treadmill Desk Workstation is not a right; it is discretionary with the dean, department chair or director, and supervisor.

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1) Introduction

a) What is a treadmill desk workstation?

- i) A treadmill desk workstation is a workspace that utilizes a treadmill and a treadmill desk as an option for a workspace, which could allow staff employees (hereafter “employee”) to be “in motion/active” while still performing their regular job responsibilities and complete nearly any job duty/task they would normally at a standard desk. This allows employees to stay productive and engaged while enhancing their health.

b) Types of Treadmill Desk Workstations:

- i) There are two types of treadmill desk workstations: an individual treadmill workstation and a shared departmental treadmill workstation.

(1) Individual treadmill desk workstation – a workstation that utilizes a treadmill and treadmill desk as the primary workspace for an individual staff employee in a private or semi - private office.

(a) Installation and utilization of any individual treadmill desk workstation is at the discretion of the supervisor and requires approval from direct supervisor and Department Chair or Dean.

(b) Department Discretionary funds may/shall be used if available.

(c) Installation and utilization of any individual personally owned treadmill desk workstation is not allowed.

(2) Shared departmental treadmill desk workstation – a workstation that utilizes a treadmill and treadmill desk as a workspace to be used by employees of a given department in a common workspace area. The department treadmill desk workstation allows for multiple employees in a department to utilize the workstation during scheduled periods of time while performing regular job responsibilities.

(a) Installation and utilization of any individual treadmill desk workstation is at the discretion of the supervisor and requires approval from direct supervisor and Department Chair or Dean.

(b) Department Discretionary funds may/shall be used if available.

2) Facility Requirements - In order to utilize a treadmill desk workstation, the following facility requirements shall be taken into consideration and maintained:

a) Office space

- i) Private or Shared - The office space shall be private or semi-private (shared).

(1) In the event the office space is semi-private, a written agreement shall be obtained between all parties who work in that location, as well as the department supervisor. The employee and supervisor agreement shall include a discussion of:

(a) Sound level-for those in close proximity, on the phone, etc.

(b) Hours of usage-by all users

(c) Location/set up of treadmill in relation to others-proximity to others; shall have 3 feet clearance behind the treadmill

(d) A trial period with specific dates

(2) In the event the office space is private, a written agreement shall be obtained between the employee and the supervisor and include a discussion of:

(a) Sound level-for those on the phone, in the surrounding offices, etc.

(b) Hours of usage-by employee

(c) Location/set up of treadmill in relation to others-proximity to others shall have 3 feet clearance behind the treadmill.

(d) A trial period with specific dates

b) Equipment requirements - Only walking work stations that are built and sold for this purpose are allowed, that is, workstations intended for the purpose of walking while working. The following companies sell a workstation specific to this function:

- i) Steelcase, Signature TM Desk, Treddesk, Trekdesk, and LifeSpan. www.workwhilewalking.com has reviews of each.

- ii) When purchasing a treadmill for the purpose of a walking workstation the following guidelines shall be ensured:

(1) Sound level-the treadmill should be equipped with a “whisper deck” or specify that it runs at a low

sound level.

(2) Motor- the treadmill should be equipped with a commercial grade motor. Home use treadmills are not designed for this purpose. A commercial grade motor is more apt to handle the demands of a walking workstation situation.

(3) Weight limit- the treadmill should be equipped to handle the maximum weight as will be used by the heaviest user. All treadmills have a weight limit.

(4) Warranty- the treadmill should come with the original manufacturer's warranty and that warranty should last for one year, at minimum.

(5) Installation and utilization of any individual personally owned treadmill desk workstation is not allowed

c) Maintenance requirements - All maintenance shall be provided on a regular basis by the user(s) according to the manufacturer's guidelines, found in the treadmill's manual.

d) Maintenance log - to be kept by user(s) and up-to-date. Log maintenance is the responsibility of the individual and department.

e) Electrical requirements - The office space shall provide proper power requirements as specified by manufacturer. The treadmill shall be powered on a dedicated circuit with computers and other office supplies/machines plugged into a separate circuit.

i) Submit Facilities and Services work request for estimate/installation of a new electrical outlet if required.

(1) Department shall be financially responsible for any required electrical updates.

f) Alternate workstation - The office space shall provide an alternative workstation in addition to the treadmill desk workstation.

i) If a smaller standard desk/workstation is needed to accommodate for space for treadmill desk workstation in an employee's office, departmental discretionary funds may be used if available.

g) Sound level – The treadmill workstation should run at a maximum of 70 decibels (dBA). (Noise Effect Handbook – A Desk Reference to Health and Welfare Effects of Noise, Environmental Protection Agency, 1981)

3) Safety Requirements - In order to utilize a treadmill desk workstation the following safety considerations shall be followed:

a) Environmental Health & Safety inspection must be performed with no outstanding deficiencies.

b) Manufacturer guidelines -Read and follow safety considerations in treadmill manufacturer guidelines.

c) Power requirements - The office space shall provide proper power requirements as specified by manufacturer. The treadmill shall be powered on a dedicated circuit with computers and other office supplies/machines plugged into a separate circuit.

i) Submit Facilities and Services work request for estimate of installation of proper outlet if required. The work order desk may be reached at 646-7114

d) Temperature control – Maintain office temperature within American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recommended limits of 68^o – 79^o F and relative humidity levels 30% - 65%.

e) Proper Attire - The employee shall wear attire which upholds the University or department dress code policy and proper footwear while walking on the treadmill workstation. Proper footwear is defined as walking shoes, athletic shoes, or sneakers. Any personal accessories shall be kept clear of the treadmill's moving parts.

f) Proper hygiene -The employee shall practice proper hygiene.

g) Desk accessories- All desk accessories shall be cleared of the moving parts of the treadmill. All cords shall be gathered and directed away from the belt and other moving parts. No other desk accessories shall be a hindrance to the treadmill's function.

h) Treadmill placement in workspace:

i) Exit corridors – Placement of the treadmill in the workspace may not impede access to the exit corridors. All exit access shall be at least 28 inches wide at all points.

ii) Clearance – All treadmills shall have 36 inches cleared space behind the belt.

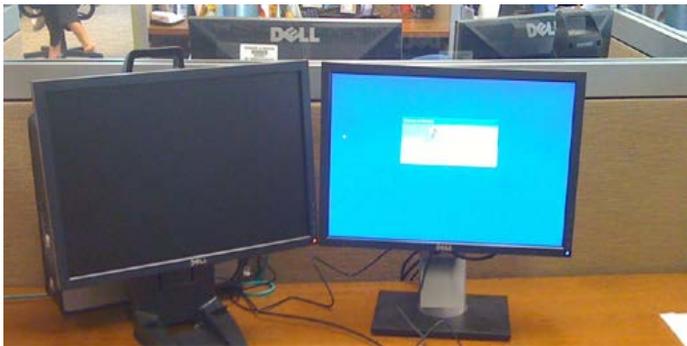
iii) Workstation set-up - It is recommended to use the same guidelines as a traditional workstation for a treadmill desk workstation. See below for guidelines.

(1) Positioning the monitor

(a) Ideally the monitor should be directly in front of the employee between 20-40 inches away (see

picture below). Studies have shown that monitors placed closer to the user can put more strain on the eyes due to convergence. Monitors placed too far away often force the user to squint and lean forward resulting in back discomfort. The top line of text should be at or slightly below eye level. This will prevent tilting the head back which can lead to neck pain. In addition, with the text slightly lower, more of the eye will be covered by the lid which will help keep the membrane moist to prevent drying of the eyes. The monitor should be placed in an area to prevent glare, if this isn't possible there are several glare reduction screens available.

- (b) Employees who utilize two monitors should have the center point where the two monitors meet directly in front of them. The monitors then can be fanned outward like a book to alleviate head movement. Please see picture below for guidance.
- (c) Employees who wear bifocal glasses should place the monitor much lower to prevent straining the neck. Possible suggestions include tilting the monitor down or removing the tilt stand from the monitor. Employees may also want to see an eye doctor about computer glasses designed for bifocal wearers.



(2) Positioning the Keyboard

- (a) The spacebar of the keyboard should be centered on the body. The input device or mouse should be placed to the left or the right. The height of the keyboard should be such that the forearms are parallel to the floor; the elbow is close to a 90° angle, and the shoulders are relaxed.
- (b) The best option for walking work stations is an adjustable surface for placement of keyboard and mouse. This allows easy adjustments in height to accommodate the user. Additionally, a contact stress relief pad (i.e. gel strip) should be used on the work surface to minimize the stress placed on the wrist and forearm.

(3) Input device/mouse

- (a) The mouse should be placed at the same height and on the same plane as the keyboard. It is important to remember to use the entire arm when moving the mouse, not just the wrist. This will help prevent ulnar (turning outward) and radial (turning inward) deviation of the wrist. Frequent use of the mouse may require repositioning the keyboard. If mousing with the right hand, move the keyboard slightly to the left for long durations of mousing. This will prevent raising the shoulder up and the elbow out, which can lead to discomfort. It is recommended to alternate between right and left hand mousing to avoid overuse, especially if mousing with the writing hand. Some input devices can also be programmed to eliminate excessive clicking which can cause pain in the hand.

(4) Telephone use

- (a) Placing the telephone too far away can cause the employee to repeatedly reach resulting in strain on the shoulder, arm, and neck. Additionally, prolonged conversations with the phone pinched between the shoulder and head may cause stress and neck pain.
- (b) Place the telephone in the primary or secondary work zone (see "work area" below), depending on usage patterns. This will minimize repeated reaching, reducing the possibility of injury.

- (c) Use a "hands-free" head set if planning to spend a lot of time on the phone. Speaker phone options may also be appropriate, provided the volume of this feature does not annoy co-workers or customers.

(5) Work area

- (a) The work area should fit the job. Pay attention to the three work zones. Anything that is used continuously throughout the day should be in the primary zone; these are items that can be reached with the elbow at a 90° angle. This includes items like the keyboard and mouse. The secondary zone encompasses everything that can be reached with the arm fully extended, but doesn't require moving the back. Items like pens, paper, and the telephone usually go in this area. The tertiary zone should contain items seldom used. Examples include printers, files, and some reference materials. Items in this zone require twisting, overextending, or repositioning the body to reach them. These positions should be infrequent since they can quickly lead to discomfort.



4) Health requirements - In order to utilize a treadmill desk workstation, the following health considerations shall be considered.

a) Risks

- i) As with any form of physical activity/exercise, there are inherent risks associated: bruises, sprains, and muscle pulls, along with more serious problems such as heart attacks, heart rhythm abnormalities and other cardio respiratory problems.

b) Consultation

- i) Before utilizing a treadmill work station, all employees should contact a medical practitioner for a consultation and assessment.

(1) The employee wanting to participate is required to sign the "Acknowledgement of Risk / Waiver and Release of Liability". A sample is attached.

c) Health/Fitness - Usage Guidelines

- i) The safety key shall be clipped to the user at all times while operating the treadmill.
- ii) The user should never walk faster than 2.0 mph while working. (<http://www.trekdesk.com/faqs>)
- iii) The grade should be less than 3% while working.
- iv) The treadmill workstation is not to be used except in the capacity for which it is designed. The treadmill is not to be used for a daily "work-out", but as a walking workstation only.
- v) Work Rest Regimen - When utilizing the computer for long durations, periodically rotate tasks to stretch and flex. The intent is for the work rotation from keying and mousing operations to begin prior to the onset of pain or discomfort.
- vi) The treadmill work station should be used minimally at first and slowly progressed over time. The beginner should increase time walking by 15 minutes each week, however, individual fitness levels will vary. Employees should consult their medical practitioner for individual recommendations.

5) Supervisor Factors to Consider

a) Factors that should be considered before approving a treadmill desk workstation:

- i) Advise employee to consult with their medical practitioner or Campus Health Center prior to submitting request for treadmill desk workstation. The employee is responsible for all costs associated with obtaining their medical consultation.
- ii) In reviewing a request for a treadmill desk workstation, supervisors need to consider the overall needs of the department, the supervisor and the employee.
- iii) Can the employee(s) fully perform his or her job duties/responsibilities while utilizing a treadmill desk workstation?
- iv) Does the employee(s) work in close proximity to others, and would his or her work environment be disrupted?
- v) Are fellow co-workers directly affected by this decision?
- vi) Will co-workers and others in the department be negatively impacted?
- vii) Are fellow office mates or co-workers agreeable to the idea?
- viii) Can the department financially support any necessary expenses in order to get the workstation up and running according to the recommended guidelines?
- ix) Has the reversibility of the treadmill desk workstation been discussed?
- x) Meet with employee to review request.

6) General Questions: Employee & Supervisor

- a) Questions to review with the employee prior to approving treadmill desk workstation usage. The following list of questions will help a supervisor determine if a treadmill desk workstation will be a successful experience for the employee and/or the department. It is recommended that the employee review the list of questions prior to meeting with the supervisor. At a meeting scheduled between the two, the questions may guide the conversation and eventually help the supervisor make an informed decision.
 - i) What is the employee's job description and Major Job Responsibilities (MJRs)?
 - ii) Can the employee's current job assignments be maintained while utilizing a treadmill desk?
 - iii) How will MJRs, job assignments, co-worker relations, and customer service be affected?
 - iv) How will co-worker and customer interactions be maintained?
 - v) Can all of the facility requirements and safety considerations for a treadmill desk be accommodated and implemented? (refer to section 2 & 3)
 - vi) What expenses are required in order for appropriate installation, utilization and maintenance of a treadmill desk workstation for either an individual or department treadmill desk workstation?
 - vii) Can the department afford the expenses for the set up and maintenance of an individual and/or department treadmill desk workstation?

7) FAQ's

- a) What are the benefits of a treadmill desk workstation?
 - i) As with any type of physical activity, there are many health benefits. These benefits can range from prevention of various diseases (heart, diabetes) to prevention of depression; weight loss and increased productivity.
- b) What are the risks of utilizing a treadmill desk workstation?
 - i) As with any form of physical activity/exercise, there are inherent risks associated: bruises, sprains, and muscle pulls, along with more serious problems such as heart attacks, heart rhythm abnormalities and other cardio respiratory problems.
 - ii) A physician's consultation is the responsibility of the employee prior to utilizing and working at a treadmill desk workstation. This consultation may be obtained from the employee's primary medical practitioner or Campus Health Center. The employee is responsible for all costs associated with obtaining the medical consultation.
- c) Who decides if an employee can have a treadmill desk workstation?
 - i) Environmental Health & Safety inspection must be performed with no outstanding deficiencies.

- ii) The responsibility for deciding if a treadmill desk workstation is appropriate for an individual employee or department ultimately lays with the supervisor or dean, pending department chair approval, demonstrated by signatures in Acknowledgement of Risk / Waiver and Release of Liability.
- iii) Initial approval and continued participation is NOT a right; it is discretionary with the department chair, dean or director.
- d) How does an employee request approval for use of a treadmill desk workstation?
 - i) After employee has had a consultation with their medical practitioner, a discussion with the employee's direct supervisor is necessary. If approved by the dean, department head and supervisor, the "Acknowledgement of Risk / Waiver and Release of Liability " shall be completed by the employee participant. A sample is attached.
- e) What treadmills and treadmill desks are recommended for a Treadmill Desk Workstation?
 - i) Refer to section 2 b.
- f) Who pays for the expenses of a treadmill desk workstation?
 - i) Individual or Department treadmill desk workstation – department is responsible for the treadmill, treadmill desk and all facility expenses.
 - (a) Fund source – Departments may use discretionary funds for purchase of equipment, Facilities and Services work to upgrade the circuitry.
- g) Who needs to inspect the treadmill desk workstation?
 - i) Environmental Health & Safety will perform a safety review upon initial installation: call 646-3327 or email ehs@nmsu.edu
- h) Who sets up the treadmill desk?
 - i) If assistance is necessary to safely move in and install, please contact Facilities and Services.
 - ii) All electrical modification shall be performed by Facilities and Services.

New Mexico State University

New Mexico State University
(department name)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISK

WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

(department name) is making the use of shared departmental treadmill desks available for use by its dedicated departmental staff only. The shared treadmill desk workstations will allow *(department name)* staff to be in motion/active while performing their regular job responsibilities. This will allow employees to stay productive and engaged while enhancing their health.

Inherent in any exercise program, however, is the risk of injury through improper use of the equipment or imprudent exercise beyond your capability. Use of fitness/exercise facilities and equipment are the user's sole risk and responsibility. All users are advised to consult with his/her personal physician before beginning use of the *(department name)* treadmill desks and must provide documentation that they are physically fit to use the aforementioned equipment. I agree to assume all risks and agree to accept the responsibility for any injuries sustained by me as a result of use of this equipment.

Fully realizing the possibility of injury, I agree to act in a prudent and responsible manner. My signature below attests to the fact that I release and hold harmless the Regents of New Mexico State University; its agents and employees, officers, and affiliates from any and all liability of cause of action resulting from my use of the treadmill desks within Sponsored Projects Accounting.

Print Name _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

File: Personnel record



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