

Break software

Preventing complaints with breaks and movement



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Have you ever suffered from RSI complaints, eye strain or pain in your neck or back?

Unfortunately, you're not the only one. Research shows that for years there has been an increase in physical complaints related to screen usage. What can you do yourself to remain healthy at work?

In this white paper we explain which complaints are most common with screen work, but also how you can prevent them. You will discover that an important key is to relax and move more during your working day. Preventing physical complaints yourself often requires you to change your work behavior. But how do you maintain this new behavior? We give you tips and tricks and tell you how a tool such as break software can support you.



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Complaints from screenwork

Various studies have shown that there has unfortunately been an increase in computerwork-related complaints



The complaints that occur most frequently are



RSI



EYE PROBLEMS



NECK AND BACK PROBLEMS



TECHNOSTRESS

Below we will explain these symptoms in more detail.



RSI stands for Repetitive Strain Injuries. Literally it means: complaints that are caused by repetitive movements. Under RSI we classify several disorders of the upper body. You probably are familiar with the tennis arm, frozen shoulder, golfer's elbow or mouse arm. These complaints often begin with cramp or a nagging pain in certain muscles or tendons. You can experience neck and shoulder pain, but also tingling in the fingers or eventually even loss of strength.

With screen work, this overload is mainly due to typing and mouse usage. This causes a dynamic and repetitive strain on the small muscles: forearm muscles and tendons in the hand and

wrist. Intensive use of these small muscles can lead to overloading.

In addition to repetitive movements, screen work also causes a static load on the larger muscles such as neck and shoulder muscles. Sitting in one position for too long with increased muscle tension reduces blood flow and will also cause these large muscles to acidify and cause pain.



Eye problems

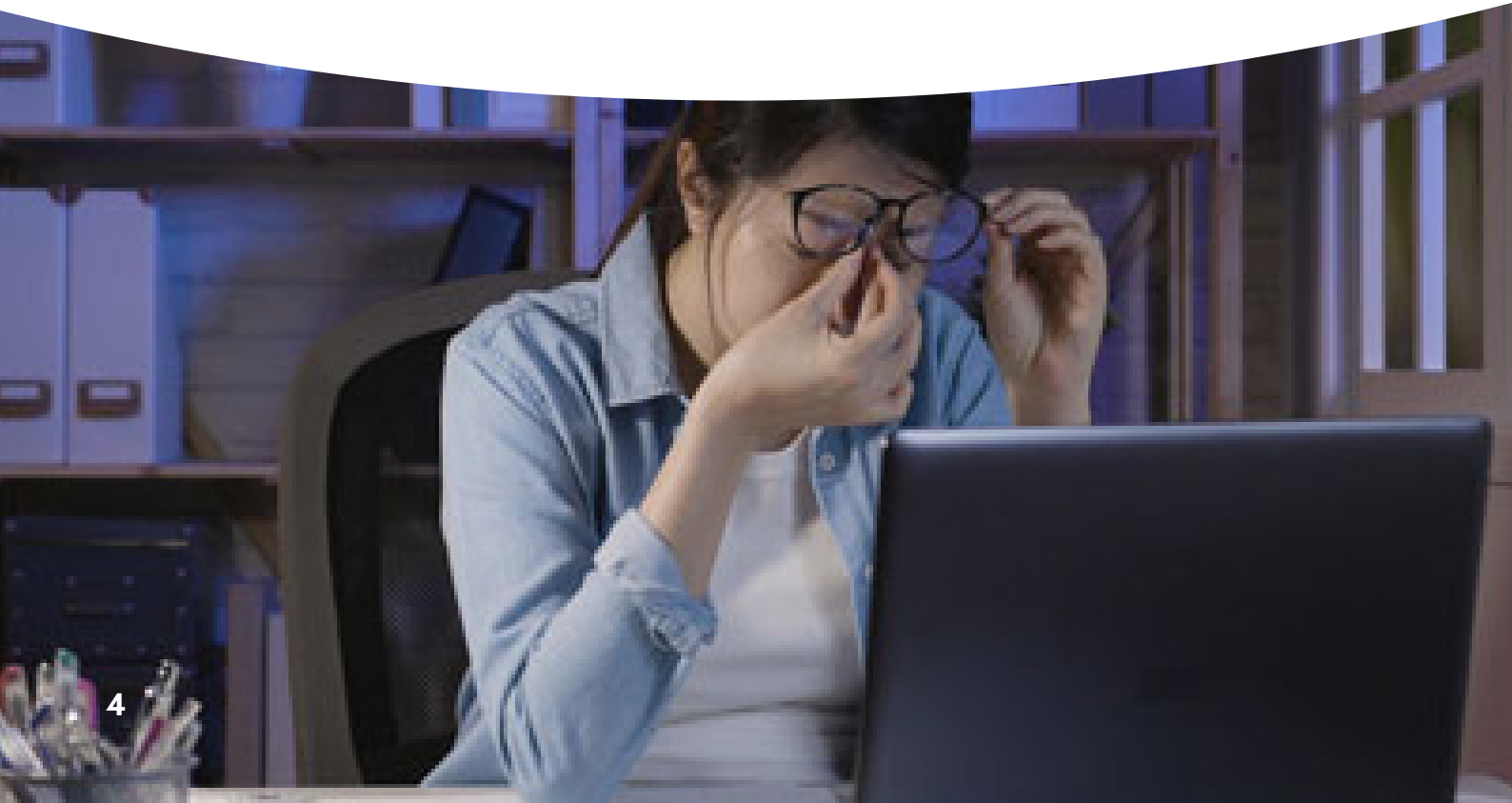
Our eyes also suffer greatly from intensive screen usage. In Europe, half of all 20-somethings are now nearsighted according to the Dutch Eye Fund.¹

The Erasmus Medical Centre in Rotterdam indicates that more and more children are also becoming nearsighted. Myopia usually starts between the ages of six and sixteen. This is the period in which the eyes grow considerably and are set for the rest of their lives. A lot of staring at screens in childhood increases the risk of myopia and can even lead to blindness. Especially now, in this time of corona, children spend a lot more time on a screen.²

The American Optometric Association has a special term for this: computer vision syndrome. This can occur as early as when people work more than 6 hours a day at a screen.

Looking at a screen for long periods of time also causes your eyes to blink less. This causes the eyes to become tired, burning or dry. It can lead to sore eyes, double or blurred vision and headache symptoms.

Besides the number of hours you spend in front of a screen, there are other factors that can cause these eye problems. For example, the screen layout, size, use of color, and readability of the screen are also influential. And finally, environmental factors such as humidity, lighting and reflections can also contribute to the development of eye problems.



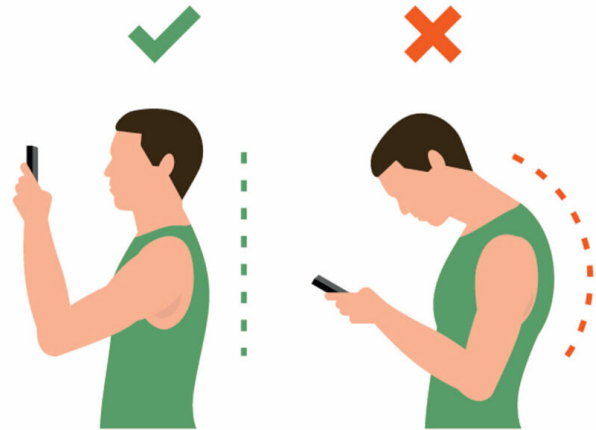


Neck and back problems

Many people sit in a hunched posture while working at a screen. This posture is reinforced with laptop use or tablet or smartphone use and can quickly lead to neck and back pain. Chiropractors, remedial therapists and physiotherapists even see a growing number of young people in their consulting rooms with a so-called "tablet neck".

Lowering your head has a huge impact on the neck muscles. In an upright posture, the weight of your head is naturally carried by your spine. In a bent posture, the neck muscles must bear the weight of the head in order to lift the head. On average, a head weighs 5 pounds, but if you hold your chin to your chest the force on your neck can be compared to lifting about 27 pounds

(see the image below). This is far too heavy for the neck muscles and can quickly lead to strain. In addition to pain in the neck, you can also suffer from circulation problems, nerve entrapment and headaches.



Perhaps this term sounds strange to the ears. Yet more and more people are experiencing stress due to technology. According to the Dutch research institute TNO, "technostress" can be explained as follows: "The stress and pressure that people experience as a

result of technology, be it by dealing with (the applications of) technology, the constant flow of communication that may follow from it or the stimuli that it entails".³

Technostress is caused by several factors:



Dealing with technology

- Dealing with technology (un)consciously
- Impact on body and mind



Distractions and stimuli

- What if I miss something?
- FOMO: Fear Of Missing Out
- Addictive effect and compulsive urge



Imbalance

- Work-life imbalance and boundlessness
- Stress imbalance and recovery



Expectations and culture

- Peer group pressure
- Own expectations

Would you like to know whether you are suffering from technostress? The following questions may help you, to find out:

- How do I deal with technology? For example, am I easily distracted? Technology is distracting, which is problematic for our concentration and productivity. Did you know that it takes about 23 minutes to regain focus after each distraction?
- What if I miss out on something? "Am I addicted to my cell phone?"
- Do you experience work-life

balance? When and where does the work end? It is precisely the ability to detach from work in your free time that is a requirement for recovering well and being able to face the next working day with renewed vigor.

- Where do I set my boundaries (for myself but also towards colleagues)?
- Do I have to be reachable always and everywhere?

If you suffer from technostress, you can experience all sorts of physical, psychological or emotional problems.



The power of relaxation and movement

If you regularly take breaks during your working day, you can prevent yourself from becoming overloaded. A short break allows muscles and tendons to relax and allows you to adopt a different working posture. Even better is to leave the workplace completely and move around. This improves the blood circulation in your body. You also give your eyes a chance to relax by looking at something other than a screen.

For this reason, the Dutch Working Conditions Act (Working Conditions Decree 5.10) contains guidelines for alternation and taking breaks during screen work.

For example, Article 5.10 states. Daily division of labour ⁴ :

“Work performed at a screen is organised in such a way that this work is alternated at regular intervals by other types of work or by a rest period, in such a way that the strain of performing work at a screen is alleviated.” (Artikel 5.10.)

In addition to the legal standards, employees and employers can reduce the risk of complaints by taking the following measures, among others⁵:

- Alternating computer screen work with other tasks. Alternating can be done in different ways: alternating work posture, work tasks, regularly looking away from the screen, taking micro-breaks (for instance of 20 seconds).- Limit tasks involving intensive screen usage. board and/ or mouse to 4 hours per day.
- Limit tasks involving intensive use of a screen, keyboard and/or mouse to 4 hours per day.
- Use break software, so that work cannot continue indefinitely. Offer break software as an aid, on a voluntary basis.



Taking Breaks..

Often we feel guilty when we take a break. As if you are no longer productive and are not going to get the work done. But we don't realize that relaxation is just as important as activity. Taking a break is certainly not a waste of time, on the contrary. A break allows you to recharge your battery and 'clear your head'. After a good break, you can get back to work refreshed, so you can work more productively and with more focus.

Check in with yourself

It is important to regularly take time for yourself during your working day and check in with yourself. Is everything still going well? Feeling a stiff neck or back often means "get moving". Variety is the most important advice. It is good to take

a break and do something completely different. Go dancing in the office or take a walk with a colleague. It's often the simple things that don't have to cost anything that get you moving and relaxing.

During these interruptions you recharge and become refreshed. And do you have a brainstorming session? Then grab a ball and throw it at each other. This will get you excited and energized. Or hold meetings while standing or walking. Then the meetings won't last too long and you will be more efficient together.

We are very much used to working with our heads, but often have little connection with our bodies. And by relaxing and moving you can stay in touch with your body.

Changing work behavior, how to do that?

Incorporate more relaxation and movement during your workday. You probably already see the benefits, but in practice it is often easier said than done. Because when you're busy and focused, time flies and another couple of hours pass by in no time at all. It's the same with resolutions. You decide to exercise more or eat healthier in the new year. But then you notice in February that things start to go wrong and usually in March all good resolutions are gone.

If you look purely at figures: a muscle needs about 3 months to get used to a new situation (such as a new position). And this is also the case with behavior. In the meantime, anything can happen to distract you. Then it comes down to your motivation in the first place. Why do you want that new behavior? It is important to get to know yourself and to know where your weaknesses lie. And how do you deal with your mistakes? Because if you don't succeed today, you can just start all over again tomorrow. This also applies to new computer screen behavior.

It is important to first take a close look at your computer screen behavior. Ask yourself questions such as:

- Do I prefer to work continuously or do I regularly walk away from my screen?
- What bad work habits do I have at this moment? Think of work posture, working hours or workplace.
- What is the status of my workload? Am I overflowing with work, then a break is likely to feel very uncomfortable. It is important to discuss excessive workloads with your supervisor and work together to find solutions to reduce them.

If you are really motivated to change your behavior and schedule more breaks and exercise times during your workday, make a plan for yourself to keep it up. In doing so, take the following steps:

- Set a concrete goal. For example, you can agree with yourself to work standing up twice a day or to go for a walk with a colleague during your lunch break. This way you make

your behavior measurable.

- Know your own weaknesses. At what point do you tend to fall back into your old behavior? And think in advance how you can persevere in those situations.
- Reward yourself. It sounds strange, but our brain is more likely to accept new behavior when we add a reward to it. And that reward can be anything; from a walk in the woods at the end of the week to a delicious cup of fresh mint tea.
- Use a tool or ask others to help you remember. Because once we are focused on our daily tasks, we often forget what we set ourselves to do.

Break software as a tool

There are several tools that can support you in taking breaks during your workday. Quite simply the use of a timer or alarm clock can be enough for some to keep working healthily. You can also use break software as support.

'Break software? Then you're forced to stop when you're just enjoying your work, aren't you? Irritating.' This is a common complaint. Break software is a tool that can support you in alternating

your posture, relaxing and working without complaints. But it only really works when it suits your needs and your way of working. Then it functions as a support in your new behavior.

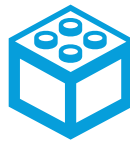


R-Go Break software



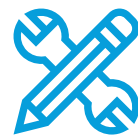
BREAK INDICATION LED

Alerts you with color signals on the R-Go Break mouse and keyboard when it's time to take a break



ADDITIONAL MODULES

The Sit/stand coach moves your desk from sitting to standing height. The Fit coach offers you various stretching exercises (45 days free)



PERSONAL

The software measures your actual mouse and keyboard usage and provides break advice based on this. The break times and frequency are personally adjustable

R-Go Break software

The R-Go Break is a software tool that helps you remember to interrupt your work with breaks. While you work, the R-Go Break software controls the LED light on your Break mouse or keyboard. This light changes color, like a traffic light. When the light turns green, it means you are working healthily. Orange indicates that it is time for a short break and red indicates that you have been working too long. This way you get feedback on your break behavior in a positive way.

The R-Go Break can be personalized. You can increase the break frequency in case of complaints or on the advice of your therapist. Personalize your breaks by, for example, setting a reminder when it's time for a cup of tea, a game

of table tennis or a walk. It is also possible to adjust the buttons of your mouse according to your personal wishes.

In addition, the software analyzes your work behavior and makes it visible. This shows how intensively you use the mouse and the keyboard and how well you follow the break recommendations. After all, to measure is to know.

Would you like to know more about R-Go Break break software or about the extra modules Sit/stand coach and Fit coach?

Visit the website:

www.r-go-break.com



R-GO BREAK

Scan the QR code to watch the R-Go Break video!

