Working at a visual display terminal (VDT)
Learn to relax and relieve tension
Avoid glare and reflections

Position your screen and table so that light enters from the side. This will prevent reflections and light shining directly onto the screen.

If this is not possible, you should not work with lowered blinds. Instead, use foil roller blinds that can be pulled up from the bottom of the window frame to the top, or vertical blinds. This ensures an unrestricted view without being blinded by light.
Adjust your chair

- Your thighs should be supported by the seat to within a few centimetres of your knees and your feet should be placed comfortably on the floor.
- The angle between your thigh and lower leg should be at least 90°.
- Your back should press gently against the backrest.

Unlock the backrest to facilitate dynamic sitting!
Adjust the table height

First make sure that the space under the table is clear and that there is plenty of room to move your legs. Now adjust the table according to the «elbow rule»: elbow height = table + keyboard height.

If the height of the table cannot be adjusted, adjust the height of your chair so that the «elbow rule» applies. To prevent your legs from dangling above the ground, shorter people may require a foot stool. The surface area of the stool must allow the feet to move in all directions.
Positioning screen, keyboard and documents

Place the screen and the keyboard directly in front of you. Place your paperwork between the keyboard and the screen, preferably on a slanted document stand (height at back 7 cm).
Working with two screens

It is recommended to position your main screen centrally in front of you. The additional screen is placed in an angle next to it at the same distance of vision.

If it is needed to use both screens frequently, you can position them symmetrically. The wedge shaped gap between the screens can be covered in colour with the screen’s bezel to avoid distraction from the background.
Screen: height and distance

Adjust your screen to the lowest possible position. The upper edge is at least 10 cm (palm’s width) below eye level. Tilt your screen to the most comfortable sight position.

Position the screen in a comfortable viewing distance (70–90 cm) to see also small characters at ease. If necessary, maximize the screen display using the zoom function. Your spine keeps in touch with the backrest.
If necessary, wear special glasses for VDT

Regular varifocals or reading glasses are not suitable for such tasks. These kind of glasses tend to force you to adopt bad postures which can lead to physical complaints. Special glasses for VDT work provide an optimal field of vision allowing you to maintain your natural posture.
Keep moving, take breaks

- Change your position and posture regularly (e.g. unlock backrest).
- Make use of the space available.
- Stretch every now and then.
- Make an effort to plan breathers and breaks.
Working on your laptop at ease

If you’re working on your laptop for more than an hour, you need a separate keyboard and a mouse. If the screen is too low, the laptop can be raised at the back (e.g. using an slanted document stand).

If you are working on your laptop for longer than two hours, using an external screen should be considered. In general, all screens should have an anti-reflective coating.
Still suffering?
Our interactive website www.suva.ch/bildschirmarbeit provides detailed information and helpful tips on trouble-free working.

Sitzen bei der Arbeit (Sitting at work)
SECO publication, 14 pages incl. checklist
Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics, order no. 710.068.d

www.ekas-box.ch
Information on the prevention of accidents in the office

Checklists
Checklists on matters relating to computer work can be downloaded directly from the Suva home page: www.suva.ch/ergonomie > Material (available in German, French and Italian).

Courses
Information about one-day courses is also available online (www.suva.ch/kurse).