



NEWS CLIPPING

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The reason why the mat was placed under the laptop of Assistant Manager, Ms. Kim

Employees at MLA receive 'ergonomic consultation'

Rearrangement of computer helps neck and shoulder pain to go away

Meat & Livestock Australia is located on the 11th floor of Kyobo Building, Gwanghwamun in Seoul. This company's office working environment has changed recently. Under notebook computers tables there is a mat about 15cm high. Office supplies are also arranged in a different way. Previously, the tables were as clear as possible but now, frequently-used items are placed on the table. There are office supplies everywhere on the table and it seems untidy at first glance.

All these changes have taken place after receiving an ergonomic consultation. Ergonomic consultations check whether working posture or the height of chair is correct. The main purpose is to prevent illnesses related to muscles and skeletal structure. The MLA undertook the consultation as there was a case in which an employee was getting physical therapy due to pain at the arms and neck without a concrete reason. With help from the Australian Embassy in Korea, the work was entrusted to Australian ergonomic consultant Diana Underwood, who is working in Korea. Underwood checked things such as the size of table and chair, posture, telephone and office supplies placement, the position of a computer monitor, keyboard and mouse, lighting, and noise.

Each employee was questioned on 30 items. Employees that felt pain in the wrist had a problem with the position of the keyboard. On their tables, low drawers for placing their keyboards were attached. Employees could type by pulling the drawer out, without putting the keyboard on the table.

During phone calls, employees would continue to type and use the mouse while putting the receiver between their shoulders and chin. Underwood made a diagnosis that the low position of the keyboard affected the wrist negatively and the posture for receiving a call also had bad effects on shoulders and wrists.

She recommended not using laptops as much as possible as it was reasoned that the narrow keyboard makes the shoulders shrink and creates a burden to arms and necks. She also advised that pain occurs in the neck as eyes look down. The MLA obtained laptop raisers for employees using laptops and made them connect to full-sized keyboards.

Underwood advised to keep frequently-used items such as telephones, writing instruments and post-its in a position that can be reached by just stretching the arms while sitting straight. For example, if a person receiving phone calls frequently keeps the phone far away, there will be some burden inflicted on his side and shoulders as he will have to lean in the direction toward the phone whenever it rings.

It was also advised that the monitor be adjusted to a position that can be reached by stretched arms while sitting. The height was also adjusted so that the end of the upper part is in line with the height of the eyes. This will lessen the fatigue on the eyes and the neck. The employees who sit in front of the monitor all day should do an eye exercise three times a day.

The eye exercise introduced by Underwood is to count till 10 while staring out of the window. She also recommended drinking 2ℓ of water a day as electrical equipment dry the office air. The degree of noise was measured too. The noise degree of inhalation exhaust pipes attached to the ceiling turned out to be 78dB, more or less equal to the level of loud TV. Since then, it has been suggested that the table below the inhalation exhaust pipe be moved to the other side.

Lee Ku (37), MLA manager, said, "Morale has been raised since the company paid more attention to illnesses related to muscle and skeletal structure of its employees."