Varidesk Use

Incident Details
Varidesks have become a popular solution to facilitate standing working postures for staff with medical conditions affecting their ability to sit for long periods of time. However, there have been reports of musculoskeletal injuries and discomfort associated with improper set-up of a Varidesk.

Neck Pain
A worker reported neck pain since using a Varidesk. The worker was not adjusting monitor height for both seated and standing positions, resulting in the monitors being too high in the seated position, causing neck extension and associated pain.

A workgroup purchased Varidesks, but realised all staff had all-in-one monitors with no height adjustability. When the users were seated, the monitors were too high, leading to neck extension. This risk factor was identified quickly and the Varidesks were returned.

Height Adjustment Mechanism
A worker reported difficulty raising and lowering the Varidesk.
Use of an all-in-one computer as part of a dual monitor set up, exceeded the weight rating of the Varidesk. The Varidesk did not collapse but more force was required to adjust the platform due to the weight. This worker replaced the all-in-one with a standard monitor to lower the weight placed on the Varidesk.

- Varidesk weight rating = 15.8 kg (most models)
- Standard monitor weights = 5-7 kg
- All-in-ones = 10-12 kg

Key Learnings and Recommendations
Use of a Varidesk does not replace the need for optimal workstation set-up. Injuries can easily occur from working at a Varidesk that is not optimally set up.

Consider the height, weight and adjustability of your computer monitors before Varidesk purchase.
- If your monitor is not height adjustable, your local IT support may be able to source a height adjustable stand.
- Consider the weight of your combined screens and swap for standard monitors if possible.
- Consider an alternative height adjustable solution with a higher weight rating.

Review your computer workstation set up using the Self-Assessment Checklist.
- Ensure monitor height is optimal, both in the seated and standing positions. This may require adjusting the monitor heights when transitioning between seated and standing set-ups.
- Align the keyboard platform with your seated and standing elbow heights to ensure optimal positioning.

If considering a sit/stand workstation, review your work practices, workstation requirements and consult this guide from Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, summarising the benefits and limitations of various sit/stand workstation solutions.

Could this happen anywhere your staff, students or you are working?
This alert is a reminder for you and your work unit to consider the effectiveness of your local safety management system in preventing an incident like this from occurring at a workplace.

Contact for Additional Information
For further information, contact your local Work Health and Safety Manager/Coordinator, or the UQ OHS Division:
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