

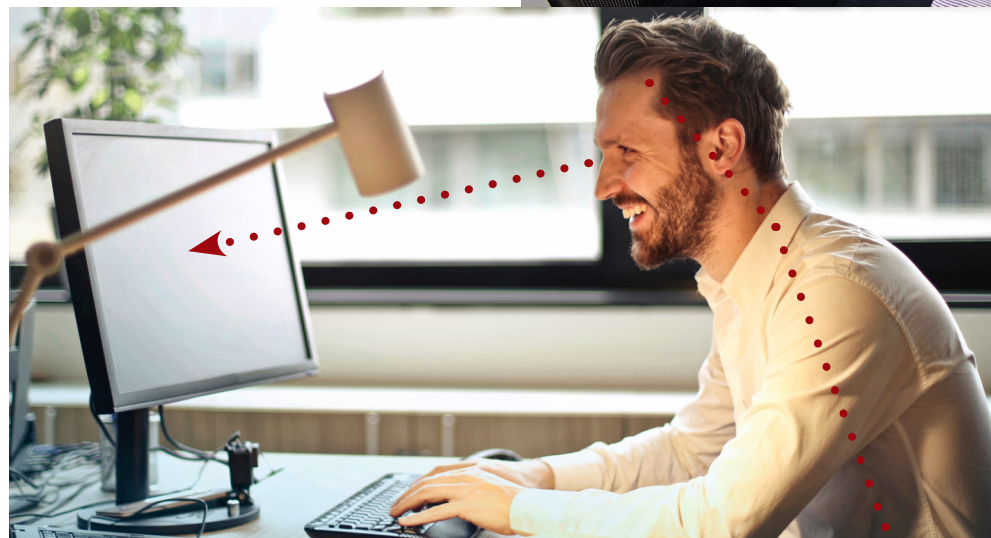


Avoiding a Computer-Based Pain in the Neck

IN OCTOBER, WE CONSIDERED MONITOR RESOLUTION AND WHETHER HAVING MULTIPLE MONITORS IS BETTER THAN HAVING JUST ONE. THIS MONTH WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT PLACEMENT.

Those who spend a lot of time with a computer need the work space to be comfortable. To many, that means buying a good chair, but ergonomics is about more than just chairs. Monitor position is important, too.

Even after you've selected one or more monitors with size and resolution that work for you, positioning the monitors can result in neck and back pain. You've probably adjusted the chair so that your feet are flat on the floor and maybe you have an articulated keyboard and an ergonomic mouse. All good, but do you have to look down at the monitor?



BOTH OF THESE COMPUTER USERS WILL DEVELOP SORE NECKS FROM USING THEIR COMPUTERS. MOST USERS PLACE WHAT THEY'RE WORKING ON NEAR THE VERTICAL CENTER OF THEIR PRIMARY MONITOR AND, IN AN IDEAL SETTING, THE CENTER OF THE MONITOR WILL BE AT EYE LEVEL.

THE MAN AT THE LEFT WILL SUFFER MORE BECAUSE, EVEN THOUGH HE HAS LEANED FORWARD, THE CENTER OF THE MONITOR IS STILL BELOW HIS EYE LEVEL.

FOR MONITORS THAT DON'T HAVE BUILT-IN VERTICAL ADJUSTMENTS, PURCHASING A STAND THAT RAISES THE COMPUTER A FEW INCHES IS A GOOD INVESTMENT.

Some monitors allow vertical adjustment, but many can only be tilted – not rotated or raised. Standard-height desks often position the monitors so that they are too low. Using myself as an example, my eyes are about 49 inches above the floor and the top of the monitor, when sitting on the desk, was 47 inches above the floor. Most people place what

they're working on near the vertical center of the screen. For me, that would be about 40 inches, which is too low for comfort.

I bought two monitor stands that can raise the height 3, 4, or 5 inches. The 3-inch extension wasn't enough, nor was the 4-inch extension. Eventually I settled on the 5-inch setting.

According to *Healthy Computing*, there are several options to consider when placing the monitor.

For most tasks, you'll want to have the primary monitor directly in front of you, but *Healthy Computing* notes that there are exceptions. Those who spend most of their time interacting with people and need to refer to



MONITORS SHOULD NEVER BE DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF, OR DIRECTLY BEHIND, WINDOWS. IF WINDOWS ARE IN FRONT OF THE MONITOR, YOU'LL BE BOTHERED BY BRIGHT EXTERNAL LIGHT. IF WINDOWS ARE BEHIND THE MONITOR, GLARE AND REFLECTIONS WILL BE A PROBLEM. WINDOWS SHOULD BE AT THE SIDE AND, IF YOU WORK WITH PHOTOGRAPHS, BLINDS WILL BE HELPFUL.

the screen less often can place the monitor on one side to allow better sight-lines for people, then turn right or left to use the computer as needed.

Determining the vertical height is more complicated. *Healthy Computing* starts with a recommendation that the top of the monitor should be 2 or 3 inches above your eye level. "If your screen is too low, you'll find yourself tilting your head forward to view the monitor (a common cause of neck pain). If it's too high, you may have to tilt your head back, leading to neck and shoulder pain – and increasing the likelihood of glare from overhead lights (a common cause of headaches)."

Those who wear bifocals or trifocals will need to further refine the height and position the monitor for best viewing through the appropriate lens.

Finding the Right Distance

OPHTHALMOLOGISTS GENERALLY SAY THAT COMPUTER GLASSES SHOULD FOCUS AT ABOUT AN ARM'S LENGTH, WHICH IS ABOUT 20 INCHES FOR MANY PEOPLE. FOR LARGER MONITORS, THAT DISTANCE CAN BE GREATER.

Healthy Computing suggests tilting the monitor slightly upward. I've tried this and don't like the effect, primarily because dual monitors align properly only when they're both fully vertical. If you choose to tilt the

monitor, be careful to avoid tipping it so far that glare becomes a problem.

Windows Are a Challenge

THE MONITOR SHOULD BE PLACED SO THAT WINDOWS AREN'T DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE SCREEN OR DIRECTLY BEHIND IT.

Healthy Computing says that the monitor's brightness should fit the viewing environment. If you frequently work with photographic images, consider adding a color management system that evaluates the room's ambient light and adjusts the monitors accordingly. The color manager also maintains color and gamma settings.

Two other tips from the article: If you work on the computer for long periods, take a 20-second time out every 20 minutes and look at least 20 feet away to give your eyes a break. Also, keep the screen clean. I've found Endust for Electronics wipes to be useful. They're also handy for removing dirt, dust, and fingerprints from smart phones, tablets, keyboards and other devices that we touch a lot.

If you'd like to read the full *Healthy Computing* article, [here's a link](#). 🏠

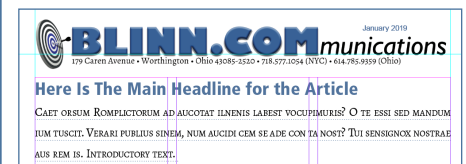
Changes Coming

**THIS NEWSLETTER WILL HAVE
A NEW NAME AND A NEW LOOK
IN JANUARY.**

The newsletter gets a new name, again, in January. It was *Random Thoughts* starting in 2004. In 2010 it became *nLightened Thoughts* because the name seemed cool.

I even registered *nlightened.com* back then, but never did anything with the domain name.

Sometimes the best name is just the name that most of your clients know you by. So starting in January 2019 the newsletter will be *Blinn.com*communications. Here's the banner you'll see in January.



In 2004, I converted the newsletter from Ventura Publisher to Adobe InDesign. Ventura was the most powerful typesetting application at the time, but it had faltered through several ownership changes.

While preparing for January's changes, I've been thinking about Ventura Publisher. In 2007 I met with a team of InDesign developers in Seattle and showed them some of Ventura's superior features.

In the intervening 14 years, Adobe has added capabilities that were never on Ventura's development roadmap and implemented many of the features that InDesign didn't have back then.

As of 2018, InDesign can do both more and less than what Ventura Publisher could do in 1995. The final owner of the application, the Corel Corporation, ceased support for Ventura Publisher nearly 2 decades ago, but some publishers still use it.

InDesign is powerful, but I still miss some of Ventura Publisher's features and sometimes wonder *What If...* 🏠