

NOT JUST FOR PHYSICIANS

A HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR WEIGHS IN ON HIS ERGONOMIC WORKSTATION

An administrative director at a large midwestern hospital saw how the radiologists benefitted from their ergonomic PACS work stations. The radiologists found that their work stations sit/stand capability, which included independent monitor height adjustment, made the hours spent in the reading room more physically comfortable. The administrator wondered why he and other administrative personnel couldn't achieve the same benefits, as he personally suffered from back pain when sitting too long.

Radiologists aren't the only ones spending a lot of time at their desks and work stations. Typical administrators, in fact virtually anyone who works at a computer, spend two to 10 hours a day at their desks. Like the radiologists he works with, this administrator is sometimes away from his desk for several hours, and sometimes spends most of his day there. It can get uncomfortable sitting in a chair for hours on end, no matter how ergonomically designed it is.

The administrator wanted a desk where his entire work surface, including the computer, keyboard and writing surface, were on one level. Rather than bending down to get files out of the cabinet, he wanted easy access, no matter the desk position. However, finding his ideal solution was more difficult than anticipated. In order

to find a solution that worked best for him, he piloted three systems by three different companies, each for a week to a few months. All were variations of a sit/stand desk. None gave him the ergonomic adjustability and workspace flexibility he wanted. One looked like a TV tray sitting on top of an existing desk, only holding his keyboard and monitor, with no room for a writing surface.

Another desk was larger, but its only writing surface included space for an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper on the side. With these systems, the administrator was forced to alternate between sitting and standing, depending on whether he needed to write or use his computer. "I was getting frustrated, because I wasn't working efficiently," he said. "I couldn't remain standing while doing paperwork and computer work."

A CUSTOMIZED SOLUTION

This administrator knew he had a lot of demands: one sit/stand work surface, attached file cabinet, computer off the floor, monitor on the same level as the work surface and a large space to deal with papers. He realized he needed a high quality product that was built-to-suit his needs but that seemed common to other office-based healthcare administrators. He did a cost justification, comparing a traditional desk and return, two drawer file cabinet and an overhead bin wall-mounted system to a unique ergonomic sit/stand RedRick work station. The RedRick solution cost only slightly more, yet provided superior ergonomic functionality and the work storage flexibility he needed, so it was cost justified. He now has full access to the desk's flat surface for his computer and writing



activities. His files are within reach whether sitting or standing and he uses a footrest to alternate his weight.

UNEXPECTED BENEFITS

In addition to eliminating his back pain, the administrator's new ergonomic workstation provided several unexpected perks. Most surprising is that when he's using the desk in the standing position, more people approach him to talk. "I can be sitting at my desk in the down position, people will stop at the door and not come into my office – they think I'm working, and might apologize for bothering me," he said. "When I raise my desk up and I'm doing the exact same thing, they walk right up to my desk and say 'how are you doing?'" He thinks of the standing workstation like it's a high top table at a bar. "We've trained ourselves that it's a socially acceptable atmosphere. I think that's a big benefit."

While he has two chairs in his office, sometimes the administrator holds meetings at the standing desk. He can spin his monitor around on the retractable arm so others can see it, and everyone can use the work station.

As a result of his ergonomic desk, "I feel better at the end of the day. My back doesn't hurt as much. It makes me feel healthier," he said. His peers now want to get the same integrated work station for themselves. The system improves his interactions with colleagues and provides a more efficient desk system because everything is on one level, whether sitting or standing. The unique solution of a built-to-suit RedRICK system offered benefits he couldn't get with any other company.