

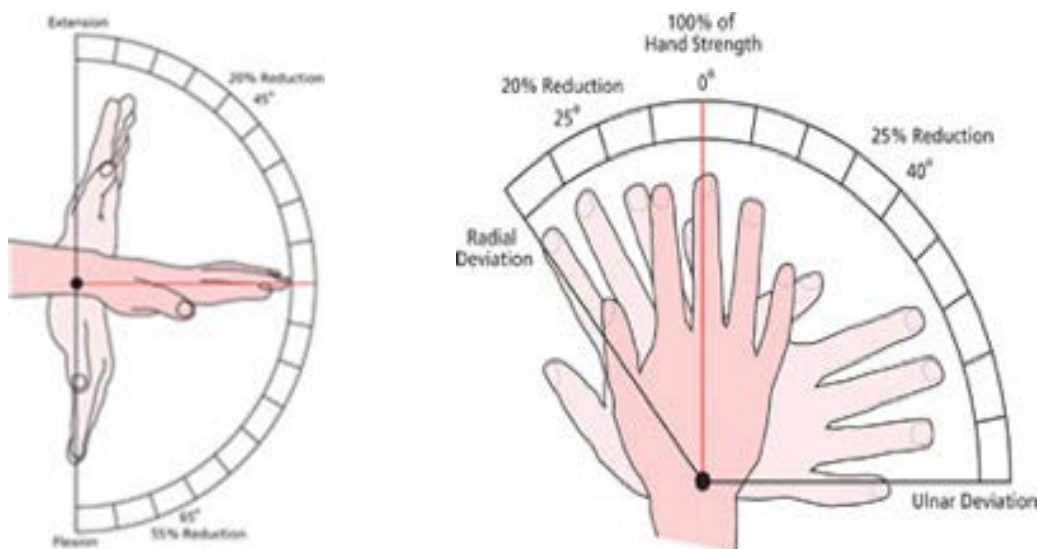
# Ergonomics: Keyboard Tray Buying Guide

**THE KEYBOARD** is the main interface between you and your computer. It is also the cause of many repetitive stress injuries. Having the right ergonomic features in a keyboard tray is essential to your health and well-being at a computer workstation. A good keyboard tray can make a world of difference. A bad one can be worse than none at all.

**ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT:** The most important feature is the ability to adjust the height. Keyboard height is determined by your chair height (if sitting) and arm length. Being able to fine-tune that and adjust it as you adjust your sitting position throughout the day is essential.

**KEYBOARD TILT:** The keyboard needs to be held at a comfortable, negative angle that supports the natural wrist position. Typically this angle does not need to be changed often. Keyboard tilt does not need to be adjusted during subtle posture changes as the angle of your arms should remain relatively constant.

However, if your posture changes more dramatically during the day — say, from a slight forward tilt to a recline — then your keyboard tray should be easy to tilt.



To obtain a natural wrist position, it is important to avoid any strong bends or deviations in the wrist. To do this, adjust the height and tilt of the keyboard until your wrist is straight, upper arms comfortably at your sides, and elbows at 90 degrees or slightly greater. Avoid “reaching” for your keyboard; your upper arm should be in line with your torso and your head should be above your shoulders. To avoid deviation, select the proper keyboard and mouse.

**MOUSE HOUSE:** The mouse should be placed next to and on the same level as the keyboard. Ideally it should be placed along the circular arc your lower arm makes when rotating from the keyboard to the side.

The keyboard tray should be able to accommodate the largest keyboard you are likely to use and the mouse on both the left and right sides. (There may come a time when mouse ambidexterity is needed.)

**THE REST STOP:** Wrist / palm rests are helpful during periods when your hands are inactive. There should be room for these as well if they are not already built in.

**STABILITY:** Your keyboard tray should be rock solid. You do not want it to wobble or deflect when in use. A wobbly tray will lead to employees removing them and not using them, and are a waste of valuable resources. Typically, the cheaper the tray the worse the wobble. Simple trays mounted with drawer runners on both sides are stable but lack most ergonomic benefits and should be avoided.

For additional information about ergonomics and some common pitfalls to avoid, check out this link: [Ergonomic Computer Station - What Not To Do](http://ergonomics.about.com/od/office/ss/computer_setup.htm). ([http://ergonomics.about.com/od/office/ss/computer\\_setup.htm](http://ergonomics.about.com/od/office/ss/computer_setup.htm))