

Using the computer

Many have to use a computer for work, which can be difficult for those with joint problems. There are many things that can now be done to help alleviate the problems associated with long term computer use.

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“I need to use the computer a lot at work and am finding it difficult using the mouse and keyboard. My hands are really swollen and stiff at the end of the day. Is there anything that I can do to help with this?”

These days many of us must use a computer at work, and it can be a struggle for people who have long term conditions that affect their joints. Long periods of keyboard/mouse use can cause swelling and pain in the fingers, and wrists.

Thankfully, there are many things that can now be done to help alleviate the problems associated with long term computer use. Here are some examples of the things that you can do to help.

If you find that your wrists swell and get painful when using a keyboard and mouse, try using a wrist support/rest. Keyboard gel pads can also help. A smaller, laptop wireless mouse is often useful as the smaller size allows the base of the hand to rest on the mouse mat.



If using the mouse is a problem, try using keyboard shortcuts. It may be slower at first, but for many people, it is much easier than using the mouse constantly.

If typing is a real problem, then there is voice recognition software available. One commonly available is called Dragon. Using a “keyguard” can also help. Keyguards have two main functions: they provide a platform which the user can rest their hands on without pressing down on the keys, and they make it difficult to hit more than one key accidentally.

When considering solutions to help with computing, remember that one size does not fit all. You can read more on our website on the following link:

www.nras.org.uk/rheumatoid-arthritis-computing

AbilityNet is an organisation that provides advice and information for individuals, charities and employers on assistive technology and accessibility. They have an extensive range of factsheets giving practical advice about specific conditions and the hardware and software adaptations that can help people of any age use computers to the full.

You can find out more about AbilityNet, the services that they offer and download their resources from the following link: [?www.abilitynet.org.uk/](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/)

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