Kensington®

White Paper

Is a Monitor Arm Worth the Investment?

Here's What We Learned by Studying 335 People at Their Desk

Monitor arms or mounts are one of many new ergonomic desk accessories that are trending in offices of all kinds — from cubicle-style to open office floor plans, and from traditional, assigned seating layouts to hot-desking environments. They have become widely popular for their support of healthier, more comfortable posture, greater productivity, and their ease of adjustability. Still, many are unclear on the value they bring to your health and well-being and debate whether or not they are worth the investment.

The Kensington team wanted to contribute to the body of work exploring their benefits by capturing both qualitative and quantitative data on their use. The goal of the research to follow: to determine whether or not monitor arms contribute to greater posture and whether or not monitor arm users are satisfied with their setup. Valuable insights can be gleaned from the series of included studies — a field study, a focus group, and a survey — for teams considering their next investment in ergonomics.

How Does a Monitor Arm Support Comfort?

A monitor arm is a highly-adjustable mount that supports the computer screen, allowing the user to elevate their work at the ideal place for working. Its base end attaches to the user's desk, wall, or ceiling, and its opposite end is secured to the rear-side of the monitor.

Effortless adjustment of the monitor's height, depth, and angle unlocked by a monitor arm enables the user to find personal comfort and optimize their productivity.

** A monitor arm is sometimes called a monitor mount, computer or dual monitor mount, monitor arm desk or wall mount, or monitor mount arm*

Who Benefits from Using a Monitor Arm?

Anybody who works at a computer for hours out of the day stands to benefit from using a monitor arm or mount. Those whose work is highly visual (coders, writers, graphic designers...) benefit from the ability to review intensive data and source material without fatiguing the eyes. Those who wear corrective lenses enjoy being able to fix their monitors at the precise height, depth, and angle to view their screen without strain. Those with dual, multi or curved monitor setups experience more productivity by having total command over the visual display of their work. Employees with an active desk setup who alternate between sitting and standing postures enjoy the ease of use afforded by equipment that adjusts in tandem with them. **Teams with a hot-desking protocol (with no assigned seats) enjoy the convenience of being able to set up an ergonomic workstation in seconds, no matter where in the office they work.** A high-quality monitor arm is effortlessly adjustable, allowing computer workers of all niches to find and maintain their personal ergonomic posture while maximizing their productivity.

A Critical Tool for Healthy Office Ergonomics

Ergonomics can be defined as a comfortable fit between humans and the technology used to do work. In the office, this tech includes every tool on the typical desk. When improvements are made in the ergonomics of these tools, improvements follow in how well the user's mind is able to work (cognitive functioning) and how good the user's body is able to feel (comfort).

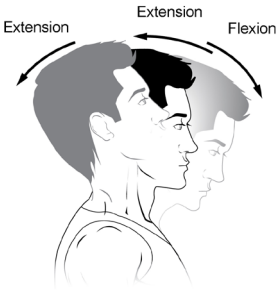
The result is that the highest quality, most productive work can be performed. Because monitor arms allow a comfortable posture through numerous working positions, they are one of the many excellent tools for a more ergonomic workspace.

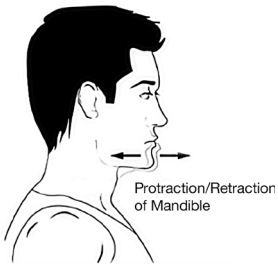
The Benefits of the Monitor Arm

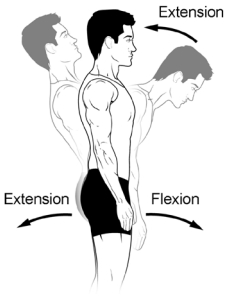
Our field study, focus group, and survey revealed data points and feedback worthy of note for teams and individuals considering an investment in a monitor arm or mount(s).

Observations from Studying 335 Computer Users in Their Natural Working State

We observed 335 computer users in their natural working state in order to find any correlation between workstation setup and posture. To spot this correlation, we measured postures through the neck and trunk with a goniometer and ran all measurements through a statistical analysis.







Individuals who use a monitor arm adopt a more ergonomic posture through the neck and trunk naturally as compared to those who use an alternative product.

50.6% of monitor arm users demonstrated a decrease in degrees of neck flexion versus those with an alternative setup. Relatedly, 27.4% demonstrated a decrease in degrees of neck protraction. As for posture through the lower body, 42.5% of those observed demonstrated a decrease in degrees of trunk flexion.

The insight from these statistics? **Individuals who use a monitor arm adopt a more ergonomic posture through the neck and trunk *naturally* as compared to those who use an alternative product.** 'Naturally' is the key word to note — even without an ergonomic intervention, people who use a monitor arm adopt a healthier posture.

Narrowing in on User Satisfaction

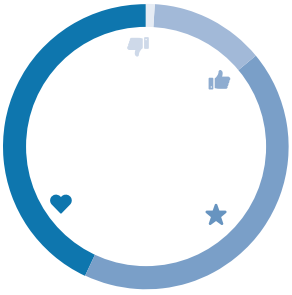
Of the 335 observed, we narrowed in on a small group of users to capture their satisfaction with their setup. This group used a variety of monitor mount or arm styles ranging from the stock height-adjustable base to a monitor riser or stacker to a monitor arm. We asked the group whether they could adjust their monitor upwards and downwards easily to a comfortable viewing height for their eyes, whether their monitor setup allowed them to bring their screen close enough to easily see it, and what they liked and disliked about their setup.

Across the board, the tilt-adjustability, height-adjustability, and overall freedom to move was championed. **All complaints documented concerned limited adjustability of alternative setups (the stock monitor base or riser/stacker) and not the monitor arm. For instance, many complained that their monitor did not adjust high enough, or the monitor stacker/riser could not easily be brought closer. The insight is that effortless adjustability is the key to success and satisfaction with any workstation setup**.

A Stable, Effortlessly Adjustable Monitor Arm = Greatest User Satisfaction

From the original 335 field study participants, we gathered a random sample of 105 monitor arm users and asked them to rate their satisfaction with their product on a scale of 1-4 (1 being "strongly dislike" and 4 being 'love it!"). **85.8% of users rated their satisfaction as a 3 or 4, 13.3% rated it as a 2 or "it is okay" and only 1% rated it as a 1. The insight is that this equates to over 99% of the computer users being satisfied with their monitor arm.**

Monitor Arm Satisfaction: Ranking Order



	Count *by Rating*	**Rating *by Percentage***
Dislike	1	1.0%
It is okay	14	13.3%
Like it	45	42.9%
Love it	45	42.9%

Those who rated their satisfaction low complained primarily of their arm not holding its position over time (note: because the user did not know how to tighten the joints) or an ergonomically-incorrect workstation setup — i.e. the desk was not deep enough to allow the ideal adjustment of the arm.

On the other hand, users who were highly satisfied with their monitor arm made remark of how strong and sturdy it felt and how much they loved the flexibility of easily adjusting the position of their screen.

The insights from this feedback are helpful to note. For one, when adopting a new piece of equipment or tool for the desk, the ergonomics of the entire workstation needs to be adjusted as well. **Products with an integrated system that guides users through an easy process of finding their ergonomic fit — like our SmartFit series — can help make this adjustment easy.** A second insight is equally worthy of note: the success and satisfaction users will have with their product depends on how easily they can adjust their product as well as how stable it feels.

What Is the Value of the Monitor Arm?

99.1%
of monitor arm users are satisfied with their setup

50.6%
of monitor arm users experience less tension (in the form of flexion) in their neck

27.4%
experience less tension (in the form of protraction) in their neck

42.5%
experienced less tension (in the form of flexion) in their trunk

Beyond Financial ROI = Comfort and Prevention of Injury

Using a monitor arm supports a healthier posture by reducing tension in the neck and trunk. This improvement in ergonomics can prevent serious repetitive stress injuries and discomforts. The long list of potential injuries and discomforts may include posterior cervical dorsal syndrome or computer back (headaches, tension, joint dysfunction, strains), lumbar sprains and strains, computer vision syndrome (blurred vision, eye fatigue, headaches, neck and back pain), muscle spasms, myofascial trigger points, disc injuries, cervicogenic headaches, impaired breathing, neck pain and strain, and fatigue.

An Improvement in Ergonomics, Without Any Effort on the User's Part

The high-level insight is that a high-quality monitor arm is a tool for greater office ergonomics. Its use contributes to better posture through the neck and lower body even without an ergonomic intervention — **though adjusting the product to the ideal height, distance, and angle certainly helps.** Success and satisfaction with the product depends on how easily adjustable the product is in hand with how stable the product feels.

SmartFit™ —a Simple System for Finding a Personalized Fit

Kensington's SmartFit system makes office ergonomics simple. Users simply place their hand on a color-coded hand-size chart to note the color that their hand fills. This color identifies the recommended position to fix their monitor arm at as a starting point. The SmartFit system acts as a simple, integrated guide for achieving an ergonomic workstation.

SmartFit® One-Touch Height Adjustable Single Monitor Arm

SmartFit® One-Touch Height Adjustable Dual Monitor Arm

Single and dual mounts with one-touch adjustability through built-in gas spring, stability-focused design, easy installation, cable management system, VESA-compatibility, landscape and portrait mode as well as stacked or side-by-side configuration.

SmartFit™ Extended Monitor Arm Mount

SmartFit®Dual Monitor Arm Mount

Single and dual mounts with included mini c-clamp, cable management system, VESA-compatibility, and portrait mode

Kensington
The Professionals' Choice™

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: 1-855-692-0054 | sales@kensington.com