

Curved Morency Rest

a review by Bob Gollihur

During my search for ergonomic solutions to my personal pain with carpal tunnel syndrome, I've recently seen designs for furniture and chairs that employ rests to support the forearm. Literature on the subject makes it clear that simply maintaining a static body position can be as damaging as movement.

Experts state that keyboarding is a combination of two kinds of work that our muscles do. While our shoulders and arms do static work to hold our hands in the typing position, the fingers perform dynamic work while keyboarding. They conclude that static effort is actually more strenuous than dynamic work, so the arm, shoulder, and other postural efforts exerted simply holding our hands in place deserve more focus. This example illustrates the point:

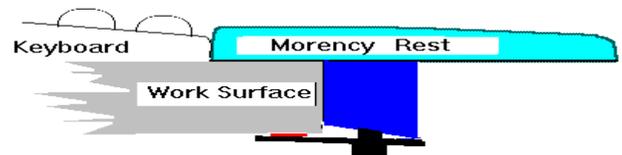
Most people would have no problem using their arms to pick up and put down a five lb. weight using their arm, continually, for a few minutes. Now, how about having that same person hold their arm outstretched with that same weight, in a single position. Even though fatigue sets in rapidly, less work is actually being done, but it isn't the type of work for which the body was designed. It's the same principle: would you rather walk for an hour or stand in one place for an hour?? Blood has difficulty flowing through contracted muscles; dynamic work actually helps pump your blood, and the blood is the key. It brings in nutrients and removes waste products that result from burning calories, particularly lactic acid.

The **Curved Morency Rest** forearm support is designed to do prevent that strain by supporting your forearms, taking some of the pressure and work off those other muscles. You sit into the installed unit, so that it partially surrounds your midsection. The best way to understand the unit, use, and its positioning, is to view the illustration.



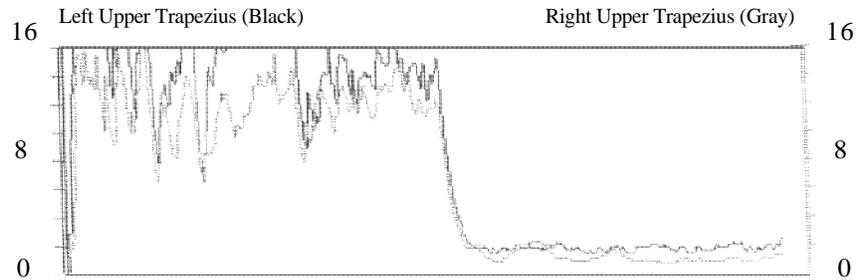
The **Curved Morency Rest** is very well-constructed, comfortable, and attractive. The illustrated model (1230CM) I experienced is covered with a very soft and comfortable, yet apparently durable cloth, in a medium grey herringbone pattern. Vinyl-covered models are also available, for industrial or medical applications. The unit's base is some sort of very firm and strong material that did not significantly bend or give. My curious nature tempted me to take it apart just to find out what it was, since the material had such good tensile strength for such a thin piece, but I resisted. Foam, in just the right firmness, fills the space between the base material and the cloth. The underside of the unit is covered with a layer of non-skid rubber. R&D Ergonomics obviously went to the trouble to find just the right combination of materials. The forearm rest instantly gave me just the right combination of comfort and support, feeling like a familiar, comfortable old chair.

Placement will depend on your workstation. In the illustration, a corner junction of two tables forms the place where you can position the **Curved Morency Rest**. Alternative mounting options are available; I used their optional clamp to attach it to the front of a my wide, yet sturdy, keyboard platform.



Two threaded inserts in the unit accommodate the simple but very sturdy optional clamp. Comprised of a slanted wood block, a thick metal plate, and two allen bolts (a wrench is supplied), it attaches firmly into the bottom of the unit. Since it overlaps nearly three inches onto your current work surface, it becomes a *part* of that structure and an integral part of your workstation. Clamps come in two sizes to attach to thicknesses from 5/8 to 2 3/4 inches, and custom sizes are available. Assembling and installing the clamp is a very simple and quick operation.

The **Curved Morency Rest** is available in a wide variety of different sizes and styles, depending on your use of a mouse, trackball, or other pointing device. There are also models for specific, ergonomic keyboards, such as the Microsoft Natural, and angled work surfaces that use the same support mechanism for workers who read and write extensively are also available. The company's catalog has ordering information along with information specific enough for you to decide which model is suitable for your given situation. An online version is available for Windows users as ERGO_CAT.ZIP (891K) on Windows OnLine (BBS), in addition to the information available by contacting R&D Ergonomics.



*reduction of upper trapezius muscle activity
(graph provided by R&D Ergonomics)*

Before I discovered the **Curved Morency Rest**, I encountered workstations that use a similar design concept that this device uses as its basis. However, I can guess that most businesses and individuals are not ready to ditch their current investment in desks to replace them at significant costs. This device is a solution — you can bring your workstation up to a new standard with a minimal investment. Concerned and aware workers who cannot motivate their employer to consider their health may want to consider investing a unit for themselves, since it is removable and causes no damage to the work surface to which it is attached.

Being certain that your existing workstation can accommodate the **Curved Morency Rest** does deserve some study and perhaps planning. The model 1230CM I installed is thirty inches wide, so attachment to many keyboard drawers and some similar systems may not be possible. However, many typing-height surfaces will be, such as desk returns, fixed-height and adjustable work surfaces specifically designed for typing/keyboarding, wide (and sturdy) keyboard drawers, and more. It was a good fit for my extra-wide keyboard pullout. I would encourage that you get creative — you deserve the best possible work environment, both at the office and at home, so use your imagination, and a saw, if necessary.

In fact, I plan to construct custom workstations in my office using **Curved Morency Rests** as their basis. I think that fact gives you some idea of how much I liked the forearm support concept and R&D Ergonomic's execution right from the start. It offers a level of instant comfort, proper support, encourages a recommended work position, and provides an economical route to get there.

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Priced according to size, from: \$55-85
Mouse/Trackball styles: \$70-100
Optional Mounting Clamp: \$15-25
(two week risk-free trial)

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