

Monitor Arms & Accessories

These are the 10 most commonly asked questions about monitor arms & accessories for commercial office environments, with straightforward answers to help you make a confident, well-informed purchase decision.

Top 10 Questions — Monitor Arms & Accessories

1

What is VESA compatibility and how do I check if my monitor works with an arm?

VESA (Video Electronics Standards Association) defines a standard pattern of four mounting holes on the back of monitors — the most common patterns are 75×75mm (for 22–24 inch screens) and 100×100mm (for most 24–32 inch commercial monitors). Before purchasing a monitor arm, look up your monitor's VESA pattern in its product specifications (found on the manufacturer's website or the owner's manual). Confirm the arm you're purchasing supports that pattern. Most commercial monitor arms support both 75×75mm and 100×100mm patterns. Some large displays (32+ inches) use 200×200mm patterns requiring specialized mounts. If a monitor uses a proprietary stand attachment with no standard VESA pattern, a standard monitor arm cannot be used.

2

What is the difference between a clamp-mount and a grommet-mount monitor arm?

Clamp-mount arms attach to the desk edge by clamping to the desk surface thickness — no holes required, compatible with desks 3/4" to 3–4" thick, and easily repositioned or removed. This is the right choice for rented spaces, temporary setups, and desks that cannot be drilled. Grommet-mount arms pass through a pre-drilled or existing 2–3.5 inch hole in the desk surface, secured from underneath with a nut — this provides a more secure, stable connection and is preferred for heavy dual-monitor arms and sit-stand desks where the movement cycle adds lateral stress on the mount. For permanent commercial installations with pre-drilled grommet holes (common on commercial desks), grommet mount is the more stable choice.

3 How high should I set my monitor with an arm?

The ergonomic standard is to position the top of the screen at eye level or very slightly below — this places the center of the screen at approximately 15–20 degrees below the horizontal line of sight, which is the natural resting gaze angle for relaxed eyes. The viewing distance should be 20–40 inches (arm's length is the common approximation). The screen should be tilted very slightly upward, approximately 5–10 degrees, to match the downward gaze angle. On a sit-stand desk, the monitor must be adjusted each time the desk height changes — gas-spring arms allow one-finger repositioning and are essential for this use case. A monitor arm's height range of 16+ inches is recommended for sit-stand desk users.

4 What type of monitor arm should I use for dual monitors?

A dual monitor arm holds two screens on a single mounting point — both monitors share one clamp or grommet. Side-by-side dual arms position both screens at the same height; stacked configurations place one screen above the other. For most commercial workstations, a side-by-side dual arm with a gas-spring mechanism provides the easiest repositioning for both screens simultaneously. Verify the arm's weight capacity — dual arms must support the combined weight of both monitors, which can total 30–50 lbs for two 27-inch displays. Also verify that the arm's horizontal reach positions each monitor's center at the user's left and right eye positions without requiring excessive neck rotation — each screen should be no more than 30–35 degrees from the user's center line.

5 Do I need a keyboard tray with my monitor arm?

A keyboard tray is needed when the desk surface is too high for neutral forearm position (forearms parallel to the floor, wrists straight). For desks at the standard 29–30 inch height, most users between 5'4" and 6'0" can achieve a reasonably neutral typing position without a tray. Shorter users and those on 30-inch desks typically benefit from a keyboard tray that lowers the typing surface 3–6 inches below the desk surface. The tray should articulate (adjust in height, fore/aft, and lateral position), have negative tilt capability (-15° to $+15^{\circ}$), and include an integrated mouse platform (specify 26–30 inch wide trays). On sit-stand desks, specify a tray with a parking or swing-away position that folds flat when the desk is raised to standing height.

6 What is a gas-spring monitor arm and why is it preferred?

A gas-spring monitor arm uses a pressurized cylinder to counterbalance the weight of the monitor, allowing one-finger repositioning in any direction — up, down, forward, back, tilt, and pan. This effortless adjustment makes gas-spring arms the standard for sit-stand desks and shared workstations where height must be changed frequently. Mechanical spring arms require more force to adjust and may not hold position as well at the extremes of their range. Fixed-position arms (also called fixed or static arms) require tools to reposition and are only appropriate for workstations where the monitor position will never change. For any commercial workstation, gas-spring is the preferred specification — the ease of adjustment directly correlates with whether users actually adjust the monitor to the correct position.

7**How does a monitor arm improve ergonomics and productivity?**

A monitor arm reclaims 6–10 inches of desk depth previously occupied by the monitor's built-in stand — on a 24-inch desk, this represents 25–40% of the entire surface area. It allows the screen to be positioned at the exact height, distance, and angle for the individual user, which is not possible with a fixed stand. Correct monitor positioning (top of screen at eye level, 20–40 inches from eyes, slight upward tilt) reduces neck flexion and eye strain — both leading causes of afternoon fatigue in office workers. On sit-stand desks, a gas-spring arm makes it practical to re-adjust the screen every time the desk height changes, which is essential for maintaining proper ergonomics through the full range of motion. This also makes workstations more easily adaptable to different users at shared or hoteling stations.

8**What is the correct cable management approach for a monitor arm?**

Commercial-grade monitor arms route cables internally through the arm channels, keeping them organized and protected — this is a standard feature on quality arms. Verify internal cable management is included when purchasing, as budget arms often lack this. Beyond the arm itself, route the monitor's power and data cables from the arm's mounting point (desk surface) to a below-surface wire management tray, then to a floor outlet or in-desk power source. At the monitor end, use velcro cable wraps (not zip ties — they cannot be adjusted without cutting) to bundle cables neatly at the back of the monitor. For sit-stand desks, use a flexible cable coil or spine for the section of cable between the arm mounting point and the floor, providing service loop for the full desk travel range.

9**What privacy screen height should I specify for benching workstations?**

The standard privacy screen specification for open-plan benching is 24 inches above the work surface — this provides good visual separation while seated and is the dominant commercial specification. Eighteen-inch screens provide only minimal seated privacy and are appropriate mainly as aesthetic accent pieces or in executive settings with naturally low bench heights. Thirty-inch screens provide high privacy, blocking virtually all seated neighbor eye contact, and are appropriate for roles requiring concentration, HIPAA-sensitive environments, or confidential work. Fabric-wrapped screens at 24 inches provide both visual separation and NRC acoustic benefit (0.20–0.55) — always specify fabric-wrapped rather than acrylic screens when any acoustic improvement is a goal, as acrylic screens provide near-zero acoustic benefit.

10

What task lighting specification should I use for commercial workstations?

Specify LED-only task lighting — LED is 50–80% more efficient than fluorescent with a 25,000–50,000 hour lifespan. Color temperature should be 3500K–4000K for general office use (a neutral to slightly cool white light that supports alertness without harsh blue cast); 5000K for high-acuity tasks requiring maximum detail visibility. CRI (Color Rendering Index) should be 90 or higher for accurate color reproduction — important for design, print, and material-matching tasks. Mounting: monitor-mount fixtures are preferred for benching environments (no base footprint consumed); surface-clamp or freestanding for standard desks. Target 500–750 lux at the work surface for sustained screen-adjacent work. Specify fixtures with an occupancy sensor or auto-off timer to reduce energy waste.

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