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## BUYER'S GUIDE

# Monitor Arms & Desk Accessories

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Your Complete Guide to Choosing the Right Monitor Arms and Ergonomic Accessories

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## Why Monitor Arms Change Everything

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If you're still working with monitors sitting directly on their factory stands, you're leaving ergonomics on the table. And ergonomics isn't just a buzzword — it directly affects how you feel at the end of the day, your long-term eye health, and how much usable desk surface you actually have.

A monitor arm holds your screen in the air, attached to the desk edge or a grommet hole, instead of sitting on a heavy plastic stand. The difference is bigger than you'd expect. Suddenly your desk surface is clear. Your monitor is exactly where it should be — at eye level, the right distance away, tilted correctly. And when you need to pull it closer for detail work, or push it away to share your screen, you just move it.

At FOF, we carry monitor arms, keyboard trays, and accessory solutions that transform a basic desk into an ergonomically optimized workspace — at prices that won't make you wince. This guide helps you pick the right combination.

## Single vs. Dual vs. Multi-Monitor Arms

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First decision: how many screens are you mounting?

**Single Monitor Arms** — For one monitor. The most common and most affordable option. If you're a one-monitor worker, a single arm is all you need. Simple installation, easy adjustment, and it works for virtually any monitor size up to 32"–34" (depending on weight capacity). A good single arm is the biggest ergonomic upgrade most desk setups can get.

**Dual Monitor Arms** — Two monitors on a single mounting base. The smart choice for users running side-by-side dual displays. Dual arms position both screens at the same height and distance, allow independent tilt and rotation, and keep the desk completely clear under both screens. Far cleaner than two separate single arms, though a bit more expensive. The two common styles: dual arms both stemming from the same base (most common and flexible) or one arm that pivots to the side for a second screen.

**Triple / Multi-Monitor Arms** — Three or more screens on one mounting system. Used by traders, editors, developers, and anyone running a multi-screen command setup. More specialized and significantly heavier. Make sure your desk edge or grommet can handle the weight, and confirm the arm's total weight capacity covers all your screens.

**When to use separate single arms:** — If your dual monitors are different sizes, or if they're positioned very differently (one landscape, one portrait), separate single arms give you more independent positioning flexibility than a combined dual arm.

## Mounting Types — Clamp, Grommet, and Freestanding

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Every monitor arm attaches to the desk by one of three methods. Know what you have before you buy:

**Clamp Mount** — The arm clamps to the edge of the desk surface using a bolt that tightens against the underside. No holes required. Easy to install and remove. Works with desk edges up to about 3"–4" thick (check the arm's spec). The clamp applies pressure to the desk edge, so confirm your desk edge is strong enough (most commercial desks are fine; thin or hollow-core desktop edges may not be).

**Grommet Mount** — A bolt passes through an existing grommet hole in the desk surface and a nut tightens from below. Very secure, very clean (no exposed clamp hardware visible from the side), and puts no pressure on the desk edge. Requires a compatible grommet hole in your desk (usually 2"–4" diameter). If your desk has grommet holes, this is usually the preferred mounting method.

**Freestanding / Base Mount** — The arm sits on a heavy weighted base on the desk surface rather than attaching to the desk itself. No holes or clamps needed. The most flexible option for surfaces where you can't clamp or grommet. The trade-off: the base takes up surface area that an attached mount wouldn't, and stability depends on the base weight (check it handles your monitor weight without tipping risk).

**Wall Mount** — The arm attaches to a wall stud, not the desk. Completely frees the desk surface. The premium setup, but requires drilling into walls and careful stud/anchor selection for the weight.

## VESA Compatibility — The Standard You Need to Know

VESA (Video Electronics Standards Association) defines the hole pattern on the back of monitors that mounting arms attach to. Before buying any monitor arm, confirm your monitor is VESA compatible.

### Most common VESA patterns:

- 75x75mm — Small monitors under 24"
- 100x100mm — The most common pattern for 24"–32" monitors
- 200x100mm or 200x200mm — Larger/heavier monitors

Check the back of your monitor or its spec sheet for the VESA pattern. Any monitor arm that matches the pattern will physically fit. If your monitor says "non-VESA" or has no mounting holes, it's typically not compatible with standard arms (a small number of adapters exist for specific non-VESA monitors).

**Max weight and screen size:** — Every monitor arm has a rated maximum screen size (e.g., "fits up to 32" monitors") and a weight capacity (e.g., "up to 20 lbs"). Weigh your monitor (usually listed in specs) and verify both dimensions. Exceeding the weight limit causes poor adjustment performance and accelerated wear.

## Weight Capacity

Monitor arms are rated for specific weight ranges. Here's a practical guide:

	Screen Size	Approximate Weight Range	
	22"–24"	8–14 lbs	

	Screen Size	Approximate Weight Range	
	24"–27"	10–18 lbs	
	27"–32"	14–22 lbs	
	32"–35" (ultrawide)	18–30 lbs	
	34"–40" (ultrawide)	22–35 lbs	

Dual monitor arms need to handle both screens. A dual arm supporting two 27" monitors needs to support 20–36 lbs total at full extension. Don't buy an arm rated for 10 lbs per arm and expect it to work well with heavy monitors — you'll get poor adjustment and drift.

**Gas spring vs. mechanical spring:** — Quality arms use gas spring mechanisms that support the monitor's weight and stay in position after adjustment. You move the arm, release it, and it stays. Cheaper arms use friction-tightened joints — you tighten screws to hold position. Gas spring is significantly better for daily adjustability.

## Ergonomic Positioning Benefits

Here's why correct monitor positioning matters — and what "correct" actually means:

**Monitor Height:** — The top third of your screen should be roughly at eye level when you're looking straight ahead. Most people have their monitor too low, causing them to hunch their neck forward all day. A monitor arm fixes this instantly.

**Monitor Distance:** — 20"–28" from your eyes is the generally recommended range. Closer than 20" causes eye strain; farther than 28" causes squinting and leaning forward. A monitor arm lets you dial in the exact distance easily.

**Monitor Tilt:** — Slight backward tilt (10°–20°) is comfortable for most users. A monitor arm lets you set this precisely and independently of height adjustment.

**Portrait Mode (Vertical Rotation):** — Many monitor arms allow 90-degree pivot to portrait orientation. This is excellent for reading long documents, coding, writing, or reviewing PDFs — the vertical format is dramatically better for document-heavy work. Most users who try portrait orientation for reading never go back.

An adjustable monitor arm combined with a sit-stand desk creates a fully ergonomic workstation where everything moves with you — up for standing, down for sitting, always at the right position.

## Keyboard Trays and Accessories

Monitor arms are the star of ergonomic desk setups, but keyboard trays and other accessories complete the picture.

**Keyboard Trays** — A retractable tray that mounts under the desk surface, bringing the keyboard and mouse below standard desk height. When seated with proper posture, your elbows should be at or slightly above keyboard height. For many people (especially those using standard 29"–30" desks), a keyboard tray achieves this better than raising your chair. Benefits: reduces wrist extension, keeps desk surface clear, allows negative tilt keyboard positioning (angled down away from you) which many ergonomists recommend.

**Types of keyboard trays:** — Fixed-height (just extends in and out), height-adjustable (adjusts up or down from the under-desk mount), and articulating (pivots side to side and adjusts height). Articulating keyboard trays are the most ergonomically flexible but also most expensive.

**Wrist Rests** — Padded supports for wrists during typing and mouse use. Note: proper ergonomic guidance is to use wrist rests during pauses in typing, not while actively typing. Gel and memory foam options available. Should match keyboard tray width.

**Monitor Risers / Stands** — For users who don't want a full monitor arm but need to raise their monitor height. A simple riser elevates the monitor on its factory stand. Less flexible than an arm but much more affordable. Works well when monitor position doesn't need to change.

**Desk Lamps and Lighting** — Good task lighting reduces eye strain. LED desk lamps with adjustable color temperature (warm for evenings, cool for focus work) and brightness are standard. Clamp-mount lamps free up desk surface space compared to base models.

## Cable Management for Monitor Arms

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Monitor arms help cable management dramatically — but only if you handle the cables properly.

**Cable clips along the arm** — Most quality arms include cable clips or built-in channels to route the monitor's power and display cable along the arm itself rather than dangling free. This is essential for a clean look and prevents cables from catching as you move the arm.

**Cable length management** — You need enough cable length to accommodate the arm's full range of motion. Measure the maximum arm extension and make sure your cables have a comfortable extra length. Too-tight cables restrict arm movement and can damage connectors.

**Velcro cable ties** — Reusable velcro ties (not zip ties — velcro allows readjustment) bundle cables cleanly along the arm and down to the desk. Simple, cheap, and effective.

**Cable spine or sleeve** — A flexible spiral cable sleeve or cable spine groups multiple cables together for a clean, single bundle look along the arm. Available in various diameters for different cable counts.

## Budget Options

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**Under \$50** — Basic single monitor arms with friction joints (not gas spring). Functional but require tightening screws to set position. Fine for rarely-adjusted setups or secondary monitors.

**\$50–\$150** — Quality gas-spring single arms and basic dual arms. The sweet spot for most buyers. Good weight capacity, smooth operation, multiple adjustment points. This is where FOF delivers excellent value.

**\$150–\$300** — Premium single arms, quality dual arms, heavy monitor capacity. Better finish quality, higher weight ratings, wider size compatibility, included cable management. Worth the upgrade for daily users with larger/heavier monitors.

**\$300+** — Professional dual and multi-monitor arms, top-tier brands (Ergotron, Humanscale). Used in professional trading, design, and engineering environments.

FOF carries monitor arms and accessories at the lowest prices available with free shipping on qualifying orders. It's one of the best-value ergonomic upgrades you can make to any workspace. Call 1.866.409.0202.

## Quick-Buy Checklist

Before you order:

- Monitor count: Single, dual, or triple?
- VESA pattern: Confirmed 75x75, 100x100, or other on your monitor(s)?
- Monitor weight: Checked spec sheet for lbs/kg?
- Arm weight capacity: Rated for your monitor weight?
- Mounting type: Clamp (no holes), grommet (existing hole), or freestanding?
- Desk edge thickness: Compatible with clamp mount if using clamp?
- Gas spring vs. friction: Gas spring strongly preferred for daily adjustment.
- Dual arm type: Combined base or independent single arms?
- Portrait mode: Needed? Confirm arm supports 90-degree pivot.
- Keyboard tray: Needed for ergonomic keyboard height?
- Cable management: Clips and sleeve included or sourced separately?
- Budget: Which tier fits your use level?
- Warranty: FOF's free lifetime warranty on qualifying products.