

HELP REDUCE ERGONOMIC RISKS

Despite reports that work-related musculo-skeletal disorders (MSDs) have declined in recent years because of greater awareness and better workplace ergonomic programs, MSDs still affect workers in almost every industry and occupation. Here are two ways you can help reduce MSD risks.

1. Report problems.

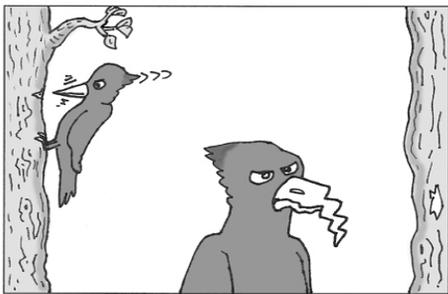
Example: Office workers at one company talked to their supervisor about the stress they experienced from long hours of working at the computer. Bending and reaching to retrieve files was also a problem.

Solution: Their supervisor trained them to use the adjustments already available in their chairs, computers, and furniture systems. Furthermore, employees were encouraged to take microbreaks to stretch and relieve muscle tension caused by sitting and keyboarding. In addition, the supervisor explained how rearranging workstations could minimize reaching and bending.

2. Suggest solutions.

Example: Employees at another company had to manually lift uncut plates of glass onto a waist-high conveyor belt from a knee-high holder, which meant the workers had to bend each time to pick up the glass.

Solution: The workers devised a stand made from a wooden shipping crate and placed it beneath the holder to raise the glass to waist height, thereby eliminating the bending and risk of back injury.



Classic repetitive motion injury.

SAFETY TO-DO LIST

Here's your safety To-Do list for today (and every day):

- ⇒ Follow all job procedures step by step. Don't take shortcuts.
- ⇒ Watch for safety hazards. Report them to management when you cannot correct them.
- ⇒ Use assigned Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, safety glasses, hard hats, etc.
- ⇒ Obey all safety rules.
- ⇒ Report any problems or safety hazards.

Safety Matters



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Work Giving You a Pain?

Think ergonomically

Ergonomics can help you avoid painful injuries to muscles and joints on the job. But what do you know about ergonomics? Choose a, b, or c for each question.

1. **What is the best definition of ergonomics?**
 - a. Fitting the worker to the job
 - b. Fitting the job to the worker
 - c. Automating jobs to eliminate workers
2. **Which is considered an ergonomic risk factor?**
 - a. Performing the same motion over and over
 - b. Constant lifting or pushing and pulling
 - c. Both a and b
3. **Which are symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)?**
 - a. Pain, stiffness, or soreness in the back, neck, arm, leg, or joints
 - b. Chronic headache and dizzy spells
 - c. Drowsiness and fatigue
4. **Which statement best describes good posture for preventing MSDs?**
 - a. Maintaining a neutral body posture
 - b. Keeping wrists bent when working
 - c. Keeping your back rigidly straight while standing or sitting
5. **Which is an example of an awkward posture that could lead to an injury?**
 - a. Resting your hand on a table to support you when you bend over
 - b. Working with your back or neck bent down or twisted
 - c. Squatting down to lift a load
6. **How can you adjust your workspace to help prevent MSDs?**
 - a. Keep work items within easy reach.
 - b. Adjust work surfaces so your arms are fully extended at waist height.
 - c. Either a or b
7. **How can you minimize the effect of repetition on your body?**
 - a. Work faster to get the job done more quickly.
 - b. Lift with your legs.
 - c. Alternate tasks.
8. **How can you relieve the stress to your back when lifting heavy objects?**
 - a. Lift with your legs.
 - b. Bend at the waist when you lift.
 - c. Keep the load away from your body as you lift.

Answers: (1) b (2) c (3) a (4) a (5) b (6) a (7) c (8) a

RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

- 1). What is a tree's favorite drink?
- 2). What do you call a country where everyone has to drive a red car?

Answer on page 2 in Safety Bits and Pieces

Safety Bits and Pieces

COOPERATE TO KEEP SAFE

Even if you do everything right 100 percent of the time, never take a risk, and always play it absolutely safe, you still won't be completely safe on the job. That's because your safety depends to some extent on your co-workers, just as their safety depends in part on you. In other words, the only way for everybody to keep safe is to work together as a team. For example:

- ⇒ **If you notice a hazard, correct it** if you can do so safely. If you can't, report it immediately.
- ⇒ **If there's something you don't know about doing your job safely, ask** your supervisor. Your whole team depends on you to do the right thing.
- ⇒ **If a co-worker asks for help, give it** willingly. That way when you need help, the favor will be returned.
- ⇒ **If you see a co-worker struggling with a heavy object, lend a hand.**
- ⇒ **If you make a mess, clean it up.** That goes for picking up tools, materials, trash, and scrap as well.
- ⇒ **If something breaks while you're using it, get it to the proper person for repair.** If it's something big that's not working properly, like a machine, shut it down and tag it out so that a co-worker doesn't use it and get hurt.

As you can see, safety teamwork is the sensible thing to do.

PDA SAFETY TIPS

Using personal digital assistants (PDAs) over a long period of time can lead to repetitive motion injuries. The problems occur when you grip the PDA in the palm of your hand between the four fingers and the fatty pad below the thumb, and use your thumb to type on the tiny keypad.

This motion can aggravate arthritis and lead to tendonitis of the thumb, as well as other repetitive motion injuries. The American Physical Therapy Association offers the following tips for preventing injury:

- ⇒ Take frequent breaks from your PDA. Don't type for more than a few minutes.
- ⇒ Write fewer and shorter messages. Abbreviate your responses when possible.
- ⇒ Avoid using your thumb for typing. Use the fingers of the other hand instead.
- ⇒ Stretch your fingers periodically, holding the stretch for 10 seconds, then repeating 8 times.

RIDDLE OF THE MONTH ANSWERS:

- 1). Root Beer
- 2). A red carnation

Back Up Your Back

Use this safe lifting checklist

Back problems are among the most common workplace musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). And one of the most common reasons for back injuries is improper lifting. Follow this checklist to lift properly.

- Stand close to the load** with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Bend your knees** and squat all the way down, keeping your back straight.
- Grip the load firmly** with both hands.
- Place your hands on diagonally opposite corners** so that one hand pulls the load toward you and the other one lifts.
- Pull the load close** to your body.
- Keep your weight centered over your feet** with your arms and elbows tucked into your sides.
- Keep your back straight** and let your legs push your body up smoothly.
- Maintain a good grip on the load** and keep it close to your body, no more than waist high, as you carry it.
- Turn by moving your feet in the direction you want to go**, not by twisting your body in that direction.
- Lower the load slowly** when you reach your destination, reversing your lifting motion, which means bending your knees and letting your legs bear the weight as you lower the load.

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH - BACKPACK SAFETY

- ⇒ Choose a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back.
- ⇒ Pack light. Organize the backpack to use all of its compartments. Pack heavier items closest to the center of the back. The backpack should never weigh more than 10 to 20 percent of the student's weight.
- ⇒ Always use both shoulder straps. Slung a backpack over a shoulder can strain muscles.
- ⇒ Consider a rolling backpack. They may be a good choice for students who must tote a heavy load. Remember that rolling backpacks still must be carried up stairs.

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Sir Winston Churchill

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...

The owner of a racing pigeon was worried sick when his bird was 21 days late returning to the coop after a 3,000 mile race. Finally, the missing pigeon casually arrived home without a feather out of place. "Where have you been?" demanded the owner. "Oh," said the pigeon, "it was such a nice day I decided to walk."

Back-to-School Safety

Make it a safe time for kids

Follow these back-to-school safety tips:

If your kids take the bus, review safety rules with them before the first day of school. The greatest risk for school children is not riding the bus, but when they are approaching or leaving the bus. To prevent accidents, teach your kids to:

- 🔔 Arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- 🔔 Stand at least 6 feet from the street or curb.
- 🔔 Wait to cross the road or enter the bus until the driver signals that it's OK.
- 🔔 Never walk behind or along the side of the bus (the driver can't see kids there).
- 🔔 Stay seated on the bus.

As a driver, remember these important back-to-school safety tips:

- 🔔 Approach school buses cautiously.
- 🔔 Prepare to stop when a slowing bus has its overhead yellow lights flashing.
- 🔔 Come to a *complete* stop at least 20 feet away from the bus when its overhead red lights are flashing.
- 🔔 Be especially alert where children congregate near bus stops.
- 🔔 Watch for kids on bikes or on foot who may dart into the road without warning.