

Ergonomics and Repetitive Motion Injuries

What is ergonomics?

The science of fitting the workplace to the worker.

The Basics of Ergonomics:

- Proper Posture
Straighten up your back by keeping ears, shoulders, and hips in a straight line.
- Managing Forces
Limit your loads and don't lift, pull, or push too much. If needed, seek assistance. Move your body around. If you sit a lot, take a break and stand up. If you stand a lot, sit down and take a break.
- Repetitive Motion Injuries
If you perform the same movements over and over on the job, you may suffer the consequences of repetitive motion injuries. You may experience: aching, numbness, weakness and pain in the affected part of your body or limbs.

What can you do about repetitive motion injuries?

Use correct posture and ergonomics

- Adjust your work so you can keep your shoulders, hips and feet in alignment.
- Use hand tools that are the right width, size and shape for you.

Give your body a break

- Pause and shake out your hands. Let them dangle.
- Get up and walk around if you've been sitting
- Stretch

Exercise your body

- Good physical fitness is vital to protect yourself from repetitive motion or cumulative trauma injuries.
- Exercise should be part of your daily routine to keep your body healthy.
- Walking is an excellent form of exercise.

Carpal Tunnel Awareness

If you do the same hand movements over and over on the job, you may suffer repetitive motion injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome. You may experience: aching wrist, numbness in fingers, hand weakness and pain extending up the arm.

What can you do?

Position your hands correctly and use correct ergonomics

- Adjust your work so you can keep your wrists and elbows straight
- Use hand tools that are the right width, size and shape for you.

Give your hands a break

- Pause and shake out your hands. Let them dangle.
- Do hand exercises.
- Wear a hand and wrist brace.

Exercise your hands

- Wrist Rotation – Make a fist and rotate your entire hand from the wrist in one direction. Repeat 15 times. Change directions and repeat 15 times. Do these same rotations again with your fingers extended.
- Hand Stretch – Make a fist, then extend your fingers as far apart as possible. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax. Repeat 5 to 10 times until hands feel relaxed.

Remember!

- Setup your station to support good posture
- Be mindful of posture
- Reduce forces
- Take breaks and stretch frequently to re-align yourself.

