

Ergonomics

How to Prevent Musculoskeletal Disorders

There is a kind of injury you could suffer while at work that you may have never even considered. You know how to avoid head injuries, falls, cut fingers or crushed feet. We talk about these potential injuries all the time. But there is another kind of injury you could develop that we haven't said much about. They are called musculoskeletal disorders, repetitive strain injuries or ergonomic injuries, and they are more common than you think.

Application:

Be sure you know the signs. It is important that you know whether you might be developing one of these injuries. If you don't report signs or symptoms early, permanent disability can result. You can avoid long-lasting problems if you let us know early enough. There are a variety of signs of ergonomic injury. Workers who suffer from these conditions may experience less strength for gripping, less range of motion, loss of muscle function and an inability to perform everyday tasks. If you have any of these signs, report them immediately. Even if you haven't experienced these signs, you could still have symptoms that indicate a possible ergonomic injury.

Such symptoms include:

- Painful joints.
- Pain, tingling or numbness in hands or feet.
- Shooting or stabbing pains in arms or legs.
- Swelling or inflammation.
- Burning Sensation.
- Pain in wrists, shoulders, forearms or knees.
- Fingers or toes turning white.
- Back or neck pain.
- Stiffness.

Summary

Musculoskeletal disorders are injuries or illnesses that affect muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints or spinal discs. They occur when there is a poor fit between a job and the person doing the job. The kinds of jobs that are most likely to cause a work-related musculoskeletal disorder are those involving reaching, bending, heavy lifting, using continuous force, vibrating equipment and repetitive motions. Carpal tunnel syndrome, trigger finger, tendonitis, rotator cuff syndrome, sciatica, Raynaud's syndrome, De Quervain's syndrome and Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome are just a few of the names for these injuries.

There are risk factors that can increase your likelihood of developing one. When you perform the same motions over and over again, the repetition places stress on the muscles and tendons.

The severity of the risk depends upon how often you repeat the action, the speed of the movement, the number of muscles involved and the required force. Another risk factor is forceful exertion. Force is the amount of physical effort required to perform a task or to maintain control of equipment or tools. The type of force depends upon the type of grip, the weight of an object, body posture, the type of activity and the duration of the task. An awkward posture is another risk factor and it occurs when your posture affects the muscle groups that are involved in physical activity. Repeated or prolonged reaching, twisting, bending, kneeling, squatting, working overhead with your arms or hands or holding fixed positions are all awkward postures.

Contact stress, such as pressing your body against a hard or sharp edge, and operating tools that vibrate can all lead to ergonomic injuries. If you think you might have one of these injuries, please let us know right away. By working together we can rid our workplace of these hazards and avoid all musculoskeletal disorders.

Date:	Company Name:		
Project Number/Name:	Meeting Location:	Person Conducting Meeting:	

Items Discussed:



Problem Areas or Concern:

CREW SIGN-OFF

Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

Crew Members: _____
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