

Ergonomics

A poorly designed workplace environment can lead not only to chronic discomfort, but also to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs); injuries and disorders to muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, and spinal discs. It is important for companies to pay close attention to ergonomics, or the worker's interaction with tools, equipment, environment, jobs, tasks, work methods, and work rates. Making some basic changes in your work environment can reap big ergonomic rewards and save your company time and money from injuries.

Office Ergonomics:

- Review illness and injury records to see if there is a pattern of injuries related to certain job sites or duties.
- Avoid glares on computer screens or shiny surfaces.
- Keep commonly used items such as computer screens at or slightly below eye level.
- Keep wrists in a neutral position while typing. Use a wrist-pad if necessary.
- Don't stand in one place on hard surfaces for too long.
- Adjust your office chair so that your knees are bent at a 90-degree angle and the back is adequately supported.
- Seek employee input about ergonomic problems.
- Analyze the workspace to spot and prevent any potential problems.

Tool Ergonomics

- Use tools with cushioned handgrips. Also use tools that minimize wrist bending and twisting, such as squeeze-grip-actuated screwdrivers.
- Use carts to move heavy loads and push when possible, rather than pull.
- Use a mechanical lift or dolly to assist with heavy loads.
- Utilize workbenches with adjustable heights and keep frequently used tools within easy reach.
- Use power tools with anti-vibration properties.
- Reduce or eliminate the amount of overtime an employee is allowed to work to help avoid injuries.
- Rotate workers among jobs to avoid repetitive stress injuries.
- Allow more breaks and recovery periods during challenging jobs.

A safety audit can also assist in spotting potential hazards, both ergonomic and otherwise. For assistance, contact Nextep's Risk Department at 888-811-5150.

Sources: www.nsc.org and www.osha.gov



**TAKE SAFETY
PERSONALLY.**

**MAKE IT PART OF
YOUR DAILY ROUTINE.**

THINK SAFETY!

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