

# SAFETY NEWS

NOVEMBER 2016

## news & notes

### ABC'S OF MSDs

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are injuries and illnesses that affect muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints or spinal disks. **Common MSDs include:**

- ▶ Carpal tunnel syndrome
- ▶ Trigger finger
- ▶ Tendinitis
- ▶ Herniated spinal disk
- ▶ Tension neck syndrome
- ▶ Rotator cuff syndrome
- ▶ Sciatica
- ▶ Raynaud's phenomenon
- ▶ Low back pain
- ▶ De Quervain's disease
- ▶ Epicondylitis
- ▶ Carpet layers' knee
- ▶ Hand-arm vibration syndrome

Individuals with MSDs may experience less strength for gripping, less range of motion, loss of muscle function and inability to do everyday tasks. **Common symptoms to watch for include:**

- Painful joints
- Pain, tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Shooting and stabbing pain 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

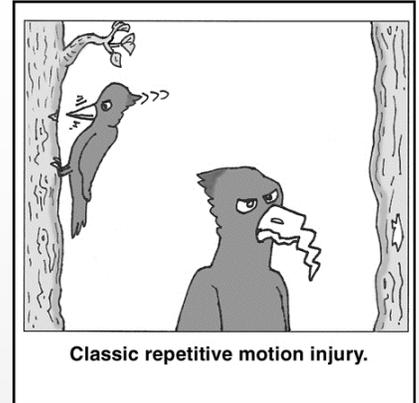
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## Work giving you a pain?

### Think ergonomically

The need for knowledge of effective ergonomics, or fitting the work environment to the worker's needs, is critical across a variety of workplaces, including retail and grocery stores, warehouses and clerical and healthcare offices. Ergonomics refers to changing the job, not the worker.

Ergonomic hazard analysis is a skill and tool that can help eliminate risk factors, improve worker health and comfort and decrease the chances of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).



### ERGONOMIC HAZARD ASSESSMENT

There are signs that indicate ergonomic problem areas. For instance, your company's OSHA 300 log or workers' compensation claims may show cases of MSDs. Additional ergonomic indicators include:

- **Regular repetitive tasks**
- **Jobs requiring forceful or prolonged exertions of the hands**
- **Vibration and/or cold temperatures**
- **Jobs requiring heavy lifting, pushing, pulling or carrying of heavy objects**
- **Poor body mechanics**
- **Restrictive workstations**
- **Awkward postures**
- **Hand tools that do not meet the requirements of the job**

### ERGONOMIC HAZARD CONTROL

After identifying hazards that contribute to ergonomic injuries and illnesses, the next step is to implement methods to control the hazards. Examples include:

- **Changing the height of a worktable** to make it more efficient, easier and more comfortable to use.
- **Putting handles on boxes or providing bins or boxes fabricated with built-in handholds** so that employees can lift loads more easily.
- **Providing counterbalancing for a tool** that weighs more than 200 pounds.
- **Providing more frequent rest pauses** for employees exposed to excessive tool vibration or excessive heat.
- **Rotating workers through jobs** that are physically tiring.
- **Reducing shift length** or limiting overtime.
- **Adjusting the work pace to relieve repetitive motion risks** and give the worker more control of the work process.
- **Keeping tools in top condition.** Tools that become dull, chipped or warped require more hand pressure to use which increases the likelihood of developing MSDs of the hand, wrist or shoulder.

## Elementary ergonomics

### Tips to reduce ergonomic risks

Consider this: there are approximately 1.8 million MSD injuries each year with 600,000 requiring time away from work. MSDs affect workers in almost every industry and occupation. Use the tips below to help reduce MSD risks if you work in an office, kitchen or retail workplace:

# OFFICE

- Computer monitor directly in front of you, at arm's length away and at eye-level.
- Elbows hanging comfortably below the shoulders, not extended outward from the body.
- Wrists in a straight line with the lower arms, with hands not flexed up or down or bent inward or outward.
- Knees bent about 90 degrees with thighs parallel to the floor.
- Chair should be at a comfortable height and feet flat on the floor or a footrest.

**Stand with your ears, shoulders and hips "stacked" in a straight line with elbows close to your body.**

Use mechanical aids for chopping, dicing or mixing food when possible.

POSITION YOURSELF AT YOUR WORKSTATION SO YOU CAN DO LESS BENDING AND REACHING.

SWITCH TASKS OR TAKE REGULAR BREAKS.

PERIODICALLY STRETCH AND SHAKE OUT YOUR HANDS TO AVOID FATIGUE.

# KITCHEN

**Match the knife to the cutting task to minimize awkward postures. Keep knives sharp and knife handles in good condition to lessen the force needed for cutting.**

# RETAIL

IF POSSIBLE, INSTALL ANTI-FATIGUE MATS AT CASH REGISTERS OR COUNTER AREAS, BUT MAKE SURE THEY AREN'T TOO SOFT.

**Lift using your legs, not your back, or use lifting aids.**

**Use thermal gloves when stocking frozen foods. Cold temperatures can reduce circulation, causing stress on the hands. If pricing, use a glove with textured fingertips to wipe frost from frozen foods.**

When standing, shift weight or elevate one foot.

**Rotate stocking tasks to avoid prolonged kneeling, squatting and overhead reaching.**

**Use knee pads when stocking low shelves for long periods of time.**