



PREVENTING MSDS WITH ERGONOMICS

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Musculoskeletal disorders are the second largest contributor to disability worldwide. MSDs can both cause and be caused by work-related injuries, but ergonomic practices at work can significantly reduce the risk of injuries and developing MSDs. Keep reading about MSDs and how to prevent them by being aware of ergonomics

WHAT ARE MSDS?

Musculoskeletal disorders or MSDs are conditions that affect the muscles, bones, joints, and nerves. Symptoms of an MSD can include pain or discomfort, numbness or tingling sensations, stiffness, cramping, and swelling of joints, muscles, tendons, and ligaments. MSDs are commonly associated with ergonomic risk factors like repetitive bending or twisting actions and poor posture. If you are obese or have a chronic health issue you could be more likely to develop an MSD at work.

One common example of a work-related MSD is carpal tunnel syndrome, a condition caused by a compressed nerve in the hand. This affects so many desk workers with poor ergonomic practices because they put extra pressure on their wrists

and compress the nerve. Other MSDs commonly associated with work injuries include sprains and strains, back pain, and arthritis. MSDs will only get worse if left untreated or if you don't adjust your practices, so if you notice symptoms contact your healthcare provider and consider what you can do differently at work to stay healthy.

WHAT IS ERGONOMICS?

Ergonomics considers health in the workplace and how to stay healthy while performing any job. Simply being aware of ergonomic risk factors can significantly reduce your chance of developing MSDs from work, which can have costly and disabling effects. The costs related to MSDs involve injuries, medical treatment, lost wages, and lost productivity.

Employers and workers share the responsibility of reducing risk factors by understanding ergonomics, taking actions to decrease those risks, and promoting best work practices throughout the organization. Employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthy work environment, and employees are responsible for completing safety training and following safety guidelines to protect themselves and others.

ERGONOMICS TO PREVENT MSDS

Ergonomics includes engineering, administrative, and personal controls to help the job accommodate the worker's health.

- › Engineering controls include designing a workspace and tools that promote healthy posture while working, automating processes, reducing heavy loads, and supplying lift-assist devices for workers.
- › Administrative controls establish standards and practices for reducing the risk of injury. These encompass adequate staffing, providing ergonomic equipment and workstations and maintaining that equipment, reporting injuries and analyzing injury logs, as well as employee education on MSDs, and implementing stretch breaks.

- › Personal controls include appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE), practicing good posture, periodically standing, and participating in stretch breaks. You can also limit heavy loads, avoid excessive bending and twisting, avoid overreaching, and keep frequently used items within a safe reach zone to protect yourself.

Implementing ergonomic awareness and promoting a culture of safety and worker health reduces the risk of work-related injuries, increases productivity and job satisfaction, and decreases costs associated with worker's compensation and health premiums.

References

1. [Ergonomics - Overview | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](#)
2. [Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders & Ergonomics | Workplace Health Strategies by Condition | Workplace Health Promotion | CDC](#)
3. [Musculoskeletal Disorders: Definition and Patient Education \(healthline.com\)](#)