

ERGONOMICS (ALL OTHERS)

OBJECTIVES

- Staff will learn proper workstation design
- Staff will learn proper body posture and positioning
- Staff will understand the organization's policies related to ergonomics

The term “ergonomics” has become quite popular and common in society today. Ergonomics is from the Greek words “ergo” which means (work) and “nomos” which means (laws). Ergonomics is the study or (laws) of how people interact with their work. In other words, how to create a good match between employees, the workstation, and tools they use. For many years employees were forced to work at workstations that were ergonomically unsuitable. These unsatisfactory conditions caused thousands of injuries and illnesses, which resulted in human suffering and inefficiency.

Cumulative trauma disorders (CTD) are illnesses caused by poor ergonomics. These illnesses affect the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, cartilage, and spinal discs. CTD result from repetitive movement or motion over a period of time (cumulative effect); it does not occur in a short period.

CTD are the fastest growing illness in the workplace, accounting for over half of all illnesses in the workplace. In 2003, CTD accounted for 435,180 illnesses involving days away from work.

By having proper ergonomic posture and workstation design, employees will minimize their potential for accidents/illnesses due to chronic physical and psychological stresses, while maximizing productivity and efficiency.

MOST COMMON TYPES OF CTD

- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:
 - When the nerve that runs through a passageway in the wrist called the carpal tunnel gets compressed.
- Tendonitis:
 - Inflammation of the tendon. This disorder typically occurs in the shoulder, wrist, hand, and elbow.

- Ganglion Cysts:
 - These cysts are associated with cumulative trauma. They appear as bumps on the wrists and can be surgically removed.
- Epicondylitis:
 - Also known as tennis elbow is the inflammation of tissue on the inner (thumb) side of the elbow.

ERGONOMIC GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to help you setup your workstations within suitable ergonomic guidelines and reduce you potential for cumulative trauma disorders:

- Work Surface (desk surface):
 - Height , 26" – 32"
 - Positioning perpendicular to the body
 - Adjustable work surface
 - Adequate space available for equipment used
 - Work area is kept orderly
- Chair:
 - 5 caster rollers
 - Adjustable seat pan and backrest
 - Lumbar support
- Monitor:
 - Height, 32" – 42"
 - Positioning perpendicular to body
 - Viewing distance approximately an arms length away (should be easily read)
 - Viewing angle, 0 – 35 degrees
 - Angle 0 – 7 degrees
 - Positioned to eliminate glare
- Keyboard:
 - Height, 25" – 32"
 - Positioning perpendicular to body
 - Maintain a 90 degree neutral posture at the elbow with wrists in line with forearm.
- Posture:
 - Elbows at a 90 degree neutral position
 - Wrist and hand in a neutral position
 - Knee angle 90 – 110 degree position
 - Feet resting on floor or footrest
- A document holder can minimize eye, neck and shoulder strain by positioning documents in close proximity and height to the screen

- Telephone use:
 - Headset should be used for extended telephone use
- Breaks:
 - Brief breaks should be taken about every hour.
 - Task rotation- change tasks as often as possible. Changing tasks reduces overexertion and strain, e.g., work at data entry for an hour, and then change to filing or returning calls. This rotation will help prevent CTD.

POLICY

Discuss all policies that relate to ergonomics.

CLOSING

- *Encourage discussion about the presentation and importance of proper body posture and workstation design.*
- *Discuss the importance of phasing out antiquated equipment by ordering only suitable ergonomic equipment in the future.*
- *Upon completion staff will check their workstations for health and injury hazards.*