

Feel it in your Bones: Be Aware of Ergonomic Hazards at Work



Tips for Prevention:

- At your desk, take time to adjust your chair, keyboard and monitor to suit you. Your chairs should have good back support; keyboards should be placed so wrists are in a neutral position; computer monitors should be at or slightly below eye level.
- Prevent eyestrain by avoiding glare. Use matte finishes or indirect lighting. Encourage regular eye exams.
- If seated for long periods of time, shift your posture regularly; take short breaks to get up and move around.
- If your job requires you to stand for long hours on hard surfaces, request anti-fatigue mats to relieve the strain on feet, legs, and backs.
- Keep frequently used parts or materials within easy reach to avoid bending or straining.
- Practice proper lifting techniques, and use trucks, carts, or dollies whenever possible.
- Choose power tools over manual tools whenever possible. Next best solution is hand tools with cushioned grips, with the handle size matched to the user and the task.
- Avoid repetitive motion injuries by mixing it up; use task rotation, short breaks, vary the pace and even job rotation to reduce stresses through repetition.

There's more to ergonomics than getting a good office chair. All workers in all industries are vulnerable to injury due to poor ergonomics and repetitive stress on the body. These injuries may not be fatal, but they can result in chronic injury, missed days of work and reduced productivity. Take a proactive approach to ergonomics in the workplace. Identify the risks in your daily routine, and take steps to alleviate the stresses on the body.

Ergonomic Risks:

- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, due to inadequate wrist support at computers and repetitive motion.
- Back strain, due to inadequate seating support, long hours standing on hard surfaces, and heavy lifting.
- Eye strain due to harsh or poor lighting, computer glare and monitor distance

If you would like to have an ergonomic review of your work station,
please contact Richard Perrelli, Industrial Hygienist,
Department of Environmental Health and Safety at ext. 5126.