



Lead, Serve, Support

January 15, 2019

ERGONOMICS... IT'S ALL ABOUT COMFORT

When we hear *ergonomics*, we often think of chairs and computers; but ergonomics is not limited to just the office. **Ergonomics is applicable throughout the workplace, including classrooms, kitchens, vehicles, storage rooms, etc., as well as ALL job classifications and duties/work assignments.**

Ergonomics is the science of **fitting the job to the worker** (not the worker to the job) in order to reduce stress on joints and ligaments and eliminate muscle strain and fatigue. A variety of factors can contribute to musculoskeletal injuries and fatigue including:

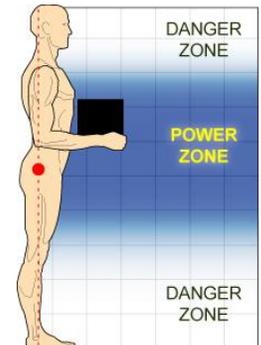
- The amount of force, or pressure, required to complete a task
- Awkward postures/positioning
- Static postures or holding the same position for more than 20 seconds
- Repetitive activities
- Continuous contact or rubbing of sensitive body tissue on a hard or sharp object/surface.



Follow principles of ergonomics to work smarter... not harder. Here's a few:

1) Maintain neutral postures

- ✓ Stand and sit up straight to maintain the "S" curve of your spine.
- ✓ Keep your neck aligned and wrists in neutral positions.
- ✓ Avoid awkward postures.
- ✓ Elevate equipment or working surfaces to a comfortable height using risers, blocks, or other stable objects to avoid awkward or prolonged bending of the back, neck, and shoulders and keep work in the power zone.
- ✓ Use a step stool, ladder, or long-handled tools to avoid excessive reaching overhead.
- ✓ Pull up a chair and sit down when working with students to avoid squatting.
- ✓ Move your feet and turn your body to avoid twisting.



2) Allow for movement and stretching

- ✓ Take micro breaks to stretch your back, neck, shoulders, and wrists to ease muscle tension, improve blood flow/circulation, and reduce fatigue.
- ✓ Shift your weight from side to side or rest a foot on a footrest or stable object when standing in the same location for extended periods.
- ✓ Take a short walk (1-2 minutes) at least once every 40 - 60 minutes.



3) Rotate tasks to reduce the risk of repetitive motion

4) Cushioning helps

- ✓ Select tools with rounded edges and larger and/or cushioned handles to allow use of a power grip; not a pinch grip.
- ✓ Wear shoes with cushioning and good support.
- ✓ Use anti-fatigue mats with beveled edges when standing for prolonged periods.

Tune in next week for more on ergonomics

For more on ergonomics [click here](#) to view a short (3 mins) video or google "workplace ergonomic videos".

SAFETY MATTERS