



Lead, Serve, Support

January 29, 2019

## Ergonomics... for Library Specialists

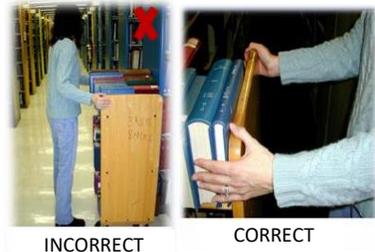
There's more to it than how to position your computer monitor and adjust your chair!

Throughout the day, library staff perform numerous manual handling tasks including scanning books, shelving books, and maneuvering book carts, which can place stress on the back shoulders, arms, hands, and wrists and result in a repetitive stress injury (RSI).

Here's a few tips to reduce your risk for a RSI while working in the library:

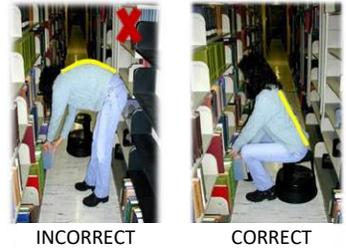
### Book Carts

- ✓ Use carts with **handles, large wheels, and high enough** so your feet won't hit the bottom as you walk.
- ✓ **Conduct a pre-use inspection.** Look for loose or worn out wheels, stability issues, and ease of movement/maneuverability issues.
- ✓ **Do NOT use a damaged cart or one which obstructs your view.**
- ✓ **Push the cart, standing at one end,** not on the side, rather than pulling it.
- ✓ Pull carts when exiting elevators or passing thru swinging doors.
- ✓ **Walk at a normal or slow pace.**
- ✓ **Keep the cart close to your body.**
- ✓ **Get help** when moving large or fully loaded carts.



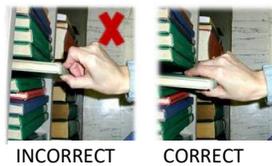
### Posture Counts: When it comes to lifting, carrying, & shelving books...

- ✓ **Bend at the knees and keep your back straight.**
- ✓ **Hold loads close to you and lift with your legs.**
- ✓ **Kneel with a knee cushioned on the floor or sit on a low stool** when shelving books on lower shelves.
- ✓ Use a foot stool to safely reach upper shelves.
- ✓ **Avoid overstretching** – it puts stress your shoulder, arms, and upper back.



### Grip Matters: When it comes to shelving books...

#### Pinch vs. whole hand grip



- ✓ Use a **"whole hand grip"** when shelving books to reduce the risk of a wrist injury.
- ✓ **Avoid using a pinch grip** – your strength is approximately 25% with a pinch grip versus a whole hand grip.
- ✓ Use a **two handed power lift** when shelving heavy books to disperse the load and maintain neutral hand positions.

#### Single vs. a two handed lift



### Work Organization makes a BIG difference

- ✓ **Vary tasks** whenever possible.
- ✓ **Work at a comfortable pace** - too fast a pace doesn't allow your body to recover from repetitive motions.
- ✓ **Alternate hands/arms** - switch between the left and right arm when shelving books to lessen the strain on your dominant arm, hand, and wrist.
- ✓ **Take frequent micro breaks** to stretch as needed.

### Weed the Collection... to make more room

- ✓ **Reduce overcrowding** - pull from circulation books and other materials which are rarely/infrequently checked out.

### Have students help scan the books

- ✓ **Teach students to scan books** to reduce your risk of a RSI caused by scanning thousands of books a day.

Ergonomics... It's about **WORKING SMARTER, not harder, and staying in your COMFORT ZONE!**

Email [safety@ncesd.org](mailto:safety@ncesd.org) to request a free ergonomic assessment with a NCESD Loss Control Specialist.

**SAFETY MATTERS**