

# Ergonomics

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## Healthcare Workers



# Session Objectives

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You will be able to:

- Identify ergonomic risk factors in your job
- Recognize musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) signs and symptoms
- Lift and carry objects safely
- Take other precautions specific to your job to prevent ergonomic injuries

# What You Need to Know

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- What ergonomics is and why it is important
- What MSDs are and how you could be at risk
- Symptoms of injuries and what to do about them
- Safe lifting technique
- Ergonomic safety precautions for each task you perform on the job

# What Is Ergonomics and Why Is It Important?

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- Ergonomics fits jobs to people
- It helps prevent injuries

# Musculoskeletal Disorders

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MSDs involve injuries to:

- Muscles
- Nerves
- Tendons and ligaments
- Joints
- Cartilage



# Major Risk Factors

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- Repetition
- Force
- Awkward postures
- Contact stress
- Vibration

# MSD Hazards on the Job

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- Housekeeping, laundry, and food service
- Patient care
- Maintenance
- Central supply
- Office



# MSD Signs and Symptoms

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- Back and neck: shooting pain, stiffness
- Shoulders: pain, stiffness, loss of mobility
- Arms and legs: shooting pain, numbness
- Elbow and knee joints: pain, swelling, stiffness





# MSD Signs and Symptoms

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- Hands and wrists: pain, swelling, numbness
- Fingers: pain, loss of strength or mobility
- Thumbs: pain at the base
- Feet and toes: numbness, stiffness, burning sensation

Be sure to report any signs or symptoms of MSDs to your supervisor right away and seek prompt medical treatment

# Basic MSD Prevention: Safe Lifting Technique

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- Plan your lift
- Stand close to the load
- Squat down
- Get a firm grasp
- Lift with your legs
- Keep the object close to your body



# Basic MSD Prevention: Safe Lifting Technique (cont.)

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- Carrying
- Unloading



# MSD Risks and Basic Prevention

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- Do you understand the information presented so far?



# Planning Patient Lifts

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- Get help if necessary
- Stretch briefly
- Select the method and equipment you'll use
- Lock the bed or chair
- Decide on your route
- Explain your plan to the patient



# Lifting Patients Safely

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Helping patients:

- Sit up in bed
- Stand up



# Lifting Patients Safely (cont.)

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Helping patients:

- Sit down
- Get up from the floor



# Lifting Patients Safely (cont.)

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- Bed to chair, chair to bed, or chair to chair
- Lateral transfer





# Lifting Patients Safely (cont.)

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- Chair to exam table
- Repositioning in bed



# Handling Carts Safely

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- Place heavy and frequently used items within easy reach
- Remove unnecessary items
- Balance loads
- Push, don't pull



# Transporting Portable Equipment

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- Rolling devices
- Obstacles
- Medical equipment
- Oxygen tanks



# Managing Liquid Transfers

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Housekeepers should:

- Use buckets with casters
- Use a hose to fill buckets
- Make sure casters roll easily
- Use proper lifting technique to empty buckets
- Get help emptying buckets if necessary

# Managing Liquid Transfers (cont.)

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Kitchen workers should:

- Use proper lifting and carrying techniques
- Use elevated faucets or hoses to fill large pots with water
- Use ladles or saucepans to empty pots
- Get help lifting or shifting heavy pots and pans

# Selecting and Using Hand Tools to Prevent Injury

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- Make sure handle fits your grip
- Use firm but comfortable grip
- Choose the lightest tool
- Select tools that have minimal vibration
- Keep tool blades sharp



# Handling Heavy Bags

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- Use a materials handling device
- Slide bags on and off carts
- Get help lifting large, heavy bags



# Loading and Unloading Laundry

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- Handle only a few items at a time
- Brace your body against the machine when lifting
- Brace with one hand, while using the other to pull knotted items free
- Use a cart to transport heavy baskets or bags



# Housekeeping Precautions

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- Use carts to transport supplies
- Avoid bending or twisting
- Alternate tasks
- Clean objects at waist level whenever possible
- Push with the leading edge when dusting
- Work spray triggers with index and middle fingers

# Housekeeping Precautions

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- Mopping and sweeping
- Kneeling
- Scrubbing
- Vacuuming



# Sit Properly to Reduce Strain on Your Back

- Sit up straight
- Lean back
- Keep your chair close to the work surface
- Turn with your whole body
- Hold paperwork upright



# Sit Properly to Reduce Strain on Your Back (cont.)

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- Adjust your chair and work surface
- Arrange your work area to minimize reaching and bending
- Position your computer correctly
- Maintain a neutral position while keyboarding
- Change positions regularly

# Preventing Ergonomic Injuries on the Job

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- Do you understand the information about preventing ergonomic injuries?



# Take Good Care of Your Back

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- Wear proper shoes
- Practice good posture
- Get regular exercise
- Sleep on a firm mattress
- Try to keep your weight down
- Don't overexert



# Don't Ignore Back Problems or Other Injuries

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- Tell your supervisor
- Seek medical treatment
- Follow your doctor's advice



# Key Points to Remember

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- Make sure you can recognize MSD symptoms
- Be aware of ergonomic risk factors
- Take proper precautions to prevent injuries
- Report any symptoms immediately and seek medical treatment