



The Safety Zone

The Newsletter of the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust

Work Giving You a Pain?

Think ergonomically

Ergonomics can help you avoid painful injuries to muscles and joints on the job. But what do you know about ergonomics? Choose a, b, or c for each question.

1. **What is the best definition of ergonomics?**
 - a. Fitting the worker to the job
 - b. Fitting the job to the worker
 - c. Automating jobs to eliminate workers
2. **Which is considered an ergonomic risk factor?**
 - a. Performing the same motion over and over
 - b. Constant lifting or pushing and pulling
 - c. Both a and b
3. **Which are symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)?**
 - a. Pain, stiffness, or soreness in the back, neck, arm, leg, or joints
 - b. Chronic headache and dizzy spells
 - c. Drowsiness and fatigue
4. **Which statement best describes good posture for preventing MSDs?**
 - a. Maintaining a neutral body posture
 - b. Keeping wrists bent when working
 - c. Keeping your back rigidly straight while standing or sitting
5. **Which is an example of an awkward posture that could lead to an injury?**
 - a. Resting your hand on a table to support you when you bend over
 - b. Working with your back or neck bent down or twisted
 - c. Squatting down to lift a load
6. **How can you adjust your workspace to help prevent MSDs?**
 - a. Keep work items within easy reach.
 - b. Adjust work surfaces so your arms are fully extended at waist height.
 - c. Either a or b
7. **How can you minimize the effect of repetition on your body?**
 - a. Work faster to get the job done more quickly.
 - b. Lift with your legs.
 - c. Alternate tasks.
8. **How can you relieve the stress to your back when lifting heavy objects?**
 - a. Lift with your legs.
 - b. Bend at the waist when you lift.
 - c. Keep the load away from your body as you lift.

Answers:

(1) b (2) c (3) a (4) a (5) b (6) a (7) c (8) a

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news & notes

HELP REDUCE ERGONOMIC RISKS

Despite reports that work-related musculo-skeletal disorders (MSDs) have declined in recent years because of greater awareness and better ergonomic programs, MSDs still affect workers in almost every industry and occupation. Here are two ways you can help reduce MSD risks:

1. Report problems.

Example: Office workers at one company talked to their supervisor about the stress they experienced from long hours of working at the computer. Bending and reaching to retrieve files was also a problem.

Solution: Their supervisor trained them to use the adjustments already available in their chairs, computers, and furniture systems. Furthermore, employees were encouraged to take micro breaks to stretch and relieve muscle tension caused by sitting and keyboarding. In addition, the supervisor explained how rearranging workstations could minimize reaching and bending.

2. Suggest solutions.

Example: Employees at another company had to manually lift uncut plates of glass onto a waist-high conveyor belt from a knee-high holder, which meant the workers had to bend each time to pick up the glass.

Solution: The workers devised a stand made from a wooden shipping crate and placed it beneath the holder to raise the glass to waist height, thereby eliminating the bending and risk of back injury.



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Five Office Hazards ...

... And five easy fixes

A *Newsweek* Internet report suggests five reasons offices can be unhealthy places. But the article also reports that "small adjustments can make a surprising difference in the quality of your day."

- 1. Sore eyes.** While looking at a computer screen, people blink up to 60 percent less, the report states, which results in dry eyes.
 - ◆ **Easy fix:** Look away from the screen at a distant object every 30 minutes and use eye drops.
- 2. Back pain.** Sitting too long in a poorly adjusted chair can cause back pain.
 - ◆ **Easy fix:** Adjust your chair so that you can work comfortably without strain. Use a cushion to support your lower back if necessary.
- 3. Too much noise.** Office noise can be stressful and distracting.
 - ◆ **Easy fix:** Use earplugs, or an iPod or portable CD player, if permitted.
- 4. Unhealthy lunches.** Eating out or eating at your desk while distracted by work can lead to overeating, indigestion, and choosing the wrong foods.
 - ◆ **Easy fix:** Bring healthy foods from home, take a lunch break away from your desk, and stay away from fattening office snacks like candy and cake.
- 5. Bullying.** Intimidating or insulting behavior can lead to stress.
 - ◆ **Easy fix:** Experts say it's better to alert your supervisor to a problem than to talk back to a bully.

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Got News?

Do you have news that needs to get out or have a subject you would like for us to address? Let us know by emailing the newsletter editor at tcreel@arkhospitals.org.

AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust Program is administered by Risk Management Resources (RMR), a division of BancorpSouth Insurance Services, Inc. www.bxsi.com. In March 2003 the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust was established. The program provides workers' compensation coverage to AHA members.

Risk Management Resources, the administrator for the program, assists members in the areas of claims management, safety and loss control. Tina Creel, of AHA Services, Inc., is the Group Manager of the Trust and provides oversight of the day-to-day operation of the Trust.

The board of Trustees provides oversight of the overall operation of the Group Trust.

AHAWCSIT



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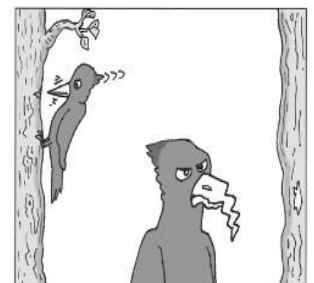
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Classic repetitive motion injury.