Ergonomics

For use in conjunction with 5-Minute Safety Talk
Ergonomics involves designing and arranging workspaces so people work efficiently and safely. Ergonomics is used to evaluate how you do your work to identify any risk factors that might lead to injury, and then find the best solution to eliminate or manage the hazard. Capabilities and limitations are taken into account to ensure tasks, equipment, information and environment suit you.
What are Ergonomic Conditions?

Disorders of the soft tissue – specifically:

- Muscles
- Nerves
- Tendons
- Ligaments
- Joints
- Cartilage
- Blood vessels
- Spinal discs
Possible Causes

- Force
- Awkward Posture
- Repetition
- Vibration
- Contact Stress
Recognizing Ergonomic Symptoms

Common ergonomic symptoms include:

• Pain
• Swelling
• Tingling
• Tenderness or numbness
• Sometimes difficulty moving or using the extremity

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, make sure to see your physician or an occupational physician as soon as possible to determine the cause of your pain.
Ergonomic Risk Factors

The main categories of ergonomic risk factors are:

- **Environment** - Risks found in your work environment
Ergonomic Risk Factors

Equipment -
Risks associated with the equipment you use
Ergonomic Risk Factors

Risks caused by work requirements, processes or procedures
Ergonomic Risk Factors

Individual – Risks that are unique to you as an individual, such as physical characteristics, habits and behavior
Non-strenuous or strenuous repetitive movement can cause ergonomic conditions. Some conditions can be brought on by:

- Sudden increases in your workload
- Introduction of a new process to your work routine
- Use of vibrating tools
- Maintaining a rigid posture
Common Ergonomic Problems

- Bursitis
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Osteoarthritis
- Tendonitis
- Tension neck/shoulder
- Trigger Finger
Ergonomic Solutions

Help minimize & possibly eliminate ergonomic risk factors:

✓ Talk with your supervisor about what to do if you are experiencing pain in the soft tissues

✓ Talk with ergonomic experts to identify what is causing your pain and to find a solution

✓ Reduce the pace of work, alternating repetitive tasks with non-repetitive tasks at regular intervals

✓ Increase the number of breaks from repetitive work

Taking appropriate steps means you will experience fewer injuries and fewer lost work days.
Checklist

Use this checklist to perform a quick ergonomic safety check.

Find the checklist under Practical Solutions at nsc.org/members
Ergonomic Tips Sheet

Use these smart tips to improve ergonomic issues with early intervention and don’t forget to bring your knowledge home too!