



Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust

A MINI TRAINING SESSION FOR INJURY PREVENTION

Quick Take on Safety

General Ergonomics

TRAINING OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

- Overview: This training discusses the importance of ergonomics and best practices for common activities.
- Purpose: This talk is designed to refresh employees about ergonomic hazards and prevention methods with the intent to prevent injuries.
- Preparation: Read and become familiar with this quick take. *Change as needed to reflect procedures and personnel in your department.*
A small, light box can be used for demonstration if desired.
- Handouts: “Workplace Stretches” and “Tendon Glide Exercises”

Ergonomics

Ergonomics is the science of adapting a workstation, process or equipment to the individual to prevent injuries, mistakes and frustration. Essentially the process of ergonomics makes the workstation, task or equipment work better for a particular employee.

Ergonomic Hazards

Ergonomic hazards can lead to strains or injuries to muscles and tendons. These injuries are often costly and take a long time to recover from and once injured, you are much more likely to reinjure the area in the future. Fortunately with a focus on ergonomics, the majority of these injuries can be prevented. Your health and safety is important to us, we don't want you to get hurt.

Prevention

Prevention efforts rely on adopting neutral postures. These postures put minimum strain on the body. Frequent breaks or limiting the time spent in awkward postures or activities can also help prevent ergonomic injuries.

Lifting/Carrying

[*Instructor prompt:* Safely demonstrate the following using a small, lightweight box]

- Plan the lift. Think before lifting about how to do it easier. Think about the path you will take and whether you'll need help. Clear the path of obstacles to prevent tripping.
- Get help when lifting heavy or bulky items or when lifting multiple items.
- Bend at the knees rather than the waist.
- Face the load and do not twist.
- Keep the load close to your body, directly in front.
- Lift with slow, continuous pressure. Avoid quick lifts.

- Store items between waist and shoulder height. This is especially important with heavy or unwieldy items. Give yourself plenty of space to lift so you have room to lift properly.
- Use carts or lifting devices to lift and carry loads.
- Maintain a clear line of sight to where you are stepping to avoid obstacles.
- Eliminate lifts entirely when possible.
- Use hands and knees to build a bridge to support weight. *[Instructor prompt: The photo to the right shows how the left arm is supporting some of the weight, demonstrate this technique.]*



Pushing/Pulling

- Push, rather than pull, whenever possible.
- Plan the route. Move items out of the path.
- Get help for large items.
- Use spotters when needed.

Grip and Vibration

- Use the proper tool for the job. Tools with longer handles can help avoid pinch grips or manipulating a tool with only two or three fingers. Angled handles can help with awkward or uncomfortable wrist postures. Wrists should be as straight as possible.
- Wear vibration-resistant gloves or other personal protective equipment when working with tools or vibrating equipment.
- Select tools with comfortably padded handles to avoid uncomfortable pressure on palms or hands. *[Instructor prompt: Ask if there are tools in use that are awkward or uncomfortable to use.]*

Standing

- For computer work, the work surface height should be slightly below elbow height when standing. This avoids hunching.
- Objects of frequent use should be placed within easy reach.
- Raising a foot on a footrest or raised platform can help rest legs and ease discomfort.

General

Take frequent breaks and stretch as necessary (see images). Stop if you feel pain.

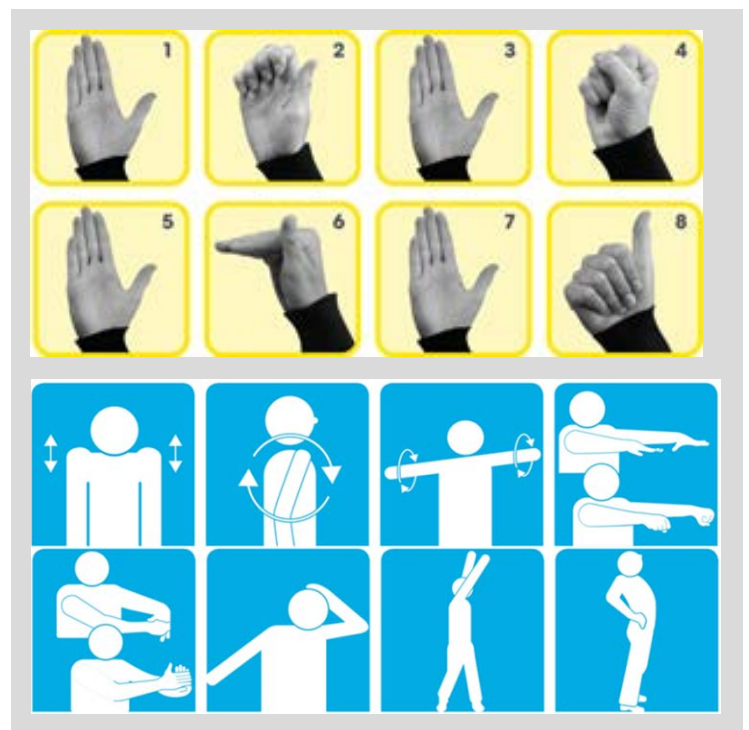
- If injuries develop, stop immediately and report the incident to a supervisor or manager.

Discussion Question

What activities present the greatest ergonomic risks and how can we address them?

Additional Activity

Lead the group in a selection of stretches. Begin by emphasizing safety.



General Ergonomics Session

Planning and Review

Trainer

Training Date

Department(s)

TRAINING GOALS

- Employees develop a basic understanding of what ergonomics is.
- Employees are aware of the importance of ergonomics.
- Employees know the best ergonomic practices when performing certain tasks.
- Employees understand the importance of reporting ergonomic injuries.

RESOURCES

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration, “Ergonomics,” [OSHA.gov](https://www.osha.gov)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders,” [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
- Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust, “Prevent Lifting Injuries from Nonroutine Activities,” [MCIT.org](https://www.mcit.org)

POST-REVIEW

Did the training meet the stated goals?

How can the training be improved?

TRAINER COMMENTS

