

# Hanover County Safety & Risk Focus

## Workplace Ergonomics



Approximately one-third of all workers' compensation claims are due to ergonomic issues, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Ergonomics is an applied science that considers people's abilities, limitations, and characteristics in the design and evaluation of work systems. Ergonomics looks at tasks, jobs, workstations, tools, equipment, and the work environment to identify risk factors that might lead to illness or injury and promote the designing of systems that preserve the wellbeing of all employees, minimize the risk of injury and illness and maximize your work performance and the performance of your organization

### Ergonomics & Musculoskeletal disorders:

- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are injuries or disorders of the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, cartilage, and spinal discs. They are disorders that affect the human body's movement. To avoid confusion from other types of injuries, MSDs do not include injuries that are caused by slips, trips, and falls or motor vehicle collisions. A few common MSDs include strains, sprains, muscle tears, tendinitis, tennis elbow, trigger finger, pinched nerves, carpal tunnel syndrome, rotator cuff injuries, back pain, and ruptured or herniated discs.
- Signs of MSDs include swelling, redness, reduced range of motion, and loss of strength. The symptoms of MSDs include tenderness, numbness, tingling, burning, aching, and pain. If you are experiencing any of these signs or symptoms, talk to your supervisor or contact your human resources representative or safety professional.

### Ergonomic risk factors

Ergonomic risk factors are workplace conditions or exposures that increase the likelihood of experiencing an MSD. The primary risk factors are:

- **Forceful exertions** - Such as lifting, pushing or pulling heavy objects, and using a manual torque wrench, utility knife or metal sheers
- **Awkward postures** - Such as reaching above the head, at full arm's length, behind the body and from the ground, and looking at screen that is too high requiring the neck to look up
- **Static postures** - Such as prolonged sitting or standing in the same place for an extended period
- **Repetitive movements** - Such as prolonged, intensive computer keying, and short cycle assembly work Exposure to vibration, cold temperatures, and contact stress (resting a body part against the sharp edge of a work surface or tool) can also increase the risk of developing an MSD.

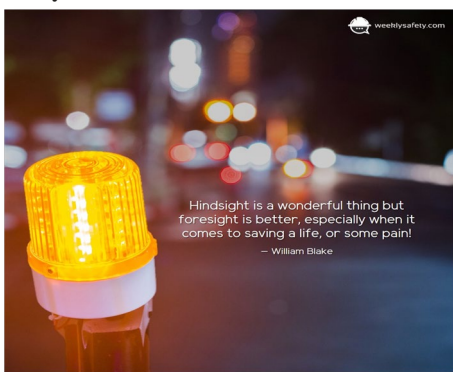
### Ergonomic solutions

After identifying ergonomic risk factors present, the next step is to redesign the work systems to eliminate or minimize your exposure to those risk factors. Steps that you can take to help minimize and possibly eliminate exposure to risk factors include:

- Use anti-fatigue mats if you're standing for long periods of time, particularly on concrete surfaces
- Alternate repetitive tasks with non-repetitive tasks at regular intervals
- Take frequent breaks if you perform repetitive work
- Arrange your tools and materials with the most frequently used and heaviest items within easy reach
- For heavy or awkward loads, use a two-person lift technique or utilize lift assist tools when available.

**Ergonomics: Because prevention is better than cure!!**

### Safety & Risk Quote of the Month:



### Safety & Risk Resources

Below are some additional resources for review & use around the topic of Ergonomics & Ergonomic injury prevention:

- [Ergonomics Two Minute Safety Video – National Safety Council](#)
- [Back Safety Two Minute Safety Video – National Safety Council](#)

Ergonomic Field Assessment

- [Workplace Ergonomic Assessment Checklist](#)