

It's a fact...

An effective ergonomics program fits the workplace to the worker.

Ergonomics—

- ◆ Improves the way people interact with the machines and tools they use for work.
- ◆ Promotes worker comfort and efficiency.
- ◆ Is essential for avoiding work-related musculoskeletal injuries and illnesses.



Using the wrong tool for a task makes it harder to do the job!

Ergonomics Program Goals

- ◆ Eliminate or reduce exposure to ergonomic risk factors.
- ◆ Improve the health and well-being of the worker.
- ◆ Improve productivity and quality.
- ◆ Prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) and related injuries and illnesses.

To have a successful ergonomics program, supervisors should:

- ◆ Coordinate with trained ergonomics, safety, and health personnel to reduce risks and support the overall ergonomics program.
- ◆ Hold personnel accountable for failure to follow safe work practices.
- ◆ Recognize and support initiatives to improve operating conditions and procedures.
- ◆ Make personnel aware of their benefits and responsibilities.
- ◆ Review work areas, tasks, and tools and equipment on a routine basis for potential workplace risk factors.

- ◆ Maintain effective schedules for facility, equipment, and tool maintenance, adjustments, and modifications.
- ◆ Ensure personnel are trained and that they can recognize and report hazardous work practices.
- ◆ Encourage personnel to report all injuries and illnesses as soon as they occur or when signs or symptoms of WMSDs appear.
- ◆ Show personal concern for worker safety and eliminate or reduce ergonomic hazards.
- ◆ Value safety and health to be as important as production.
- ◆ Promote good ergonomic design in the workplace, which will improve readiness, production, work quality, and morale and decrease the costs of lost work and limited duty time, turnover, training, and replacement.

To encourage worker involvement in the ergonomics program, supervisors should also:

- ◆ Provide a procedure for complaints or suggestions.
- ◆ Allow workers to bring their concerns to management without fear of reprisal.
- ◆ Provide a procedure for workers to report signs and symptoms of WMSDs so they may be evaluated and treated.
- ◆ Allow safety and health committees to recommend corrective action when they receive and analyze information on ergonomic problem areas.
- ◆ Encourage worker groups to identify and analyze jobs for ergonomic stress and offer solutions.

Workplace risk factors do more than cause WMSDs; they cause fatigue and poor work performance. This cuts into productivity and quality. An ergonomics program improves worker performance and well-being and helps management increase productivity and quality—the ultimate measures of a supervisor’s success.



This fact sheet is a product of the DoD Ergonomics Working Group, was adapted from their June 2000 publication, *Preventing Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders in the Workplace*, and supersedes USACHPPM Fact Sheet 88-001-0599.

Written for both supervisors and workers, the fact sheet provides basic information on ergonomics. For more information, visit the working group’s Web site at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/ergowg/product.htm>.