

It's a fact...

You can evaluate ergonomic products to see if they truly meet your needs.

It is a vendor's job to sell. It is *your* job to cut through the sales pitch to determine if what is being offered truly meets your needs. Some suggestions for evaluating a product are presented below. For additional guidance, contact your local occupational health or safety office.

- ◆ **Perform “real life testing.”** The best way to evaluate equipment is to use the equipment under a variety of conditions with different users. Work with local logistics personnel and contact the vendors. Some may provide a demonstration of or allow you to test their equipment prior to purchase.
- ◆ **Evaluate the product literature.** Look for adjustability to accommodate a wide range of users. If the equipment is not adjustable, look at the working dimensions and assess the usability for your working population.
- ◆ **Evaluate the manufacturer's “track record.”** Does the manufacturer usually provide a good ergonomic design based on your (or someone else's) experience with the manufacturer?
- ◆ **Evaluate the vendor's reputation.** Vendors with a reputation for quality design work tend to consider the human usability of their designs.
- ◆ **Develop clear specifications for the equipment.** This is the best way to evaluate the equipment without hands-on use *prior* to purchase.

Keep in mind, specifications like “ergonomically designed” and “user friendly” are very general and vague. Assume products with these descriptions are not any better than any other products on the market.



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

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/ergwg/product.htm>.