

KSU Facilities Safety Bulletin

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Ergonomics

Why should you be mindful of ergonomics? Well, it can actually reduce potential injury or illness that can result from work that puts stress on your muscles, nerves or joints.

When you're working in construction for a living, these types of injuries can be quite common – especially musculoskeletal disorders or cumulative trauma disorders (CTDs). These injuries occur as a result of repetitive motion or stress and injuries often happen slowly over time.

If you've experienced cumulative trauma, there are physical problems you'll notice. This includes pain and damage to muscles, tendons, and nerves in the back, neck, shoulders, wrists, hands, and elbows. Typical ailments include: Tendonitis, "Tennis Elbow," Trigger Finger, lower back pain, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome which causes hands and wrists to tingle or become numb, and Reynaud's Syndrome which causes fingers to become white.

So, why do these injuries happen? Usually, it results from a worker making the same motion over and over, or staying in one position too long, and working in awkward positions. It can also occur when workers use tools that aren't right for the body – and you may be exposed to a lot of force or vibration over time.

June HSI/Vivid Course

Custodial & Operations: Industrial Ergonomics

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Injuries associated with poor ergonomics can happen to anyone (even office staff)! So, how can you protect yourself? The most important thing you can do is practice basic ergonomics including:

- You have two hands, so you should use both while completing a task. Doing so can reduce the strain on muscles.
- Use the right tools for your job – those which are proportioned to your body.
- Use power tools (instead of manual tools) if possible.
- Take a break and rest when you're engaged in repetitive motion tasks.
- Avoid working in awkward positions.
- Wear gloves to reduce pressure or vibration on your hands/fingers.
- Stretch often or change positions while working. Doing so will improve blood circulation.

If you experience symptoms associated with repetitive motion injuries, you need to report this to your supervisor as soon as possible. Things like numbness, tingling or pain in hands, arms or neck are all signs you shouldn't ignore. A simple conversation with your supervisor could result in a change in workstations or equipment, which can alleviate these problems (before they become chronic). Please remember to seek medical attention if these symptoms persist.

Source: [Safety Communications](#)