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The Occupational  
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# Ergonomics and Cumulative Trauma Injuries: The Basics

## OSHA

- Was created by the US Congress in 1979
- Works to ensure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women
- Sets and enforces standards
- Provides training, outreach, education and assistance

## Under OSHA, workers have the right to:

- A safe and healthful workplace
- Know about hazardous chemicals
- Information about injuries and illnesses in the workplace
- Request hazard correction from employer
- Training
- Hazard exposure and medical records
- File a complaint with OSHA
- Participate in an OSHA inspection
- Be free from retaliation for exercising safety and health rights

## Housekeepers: Practices to Improve Health & Safety using Ergonomics



## Institute for Ergonomics

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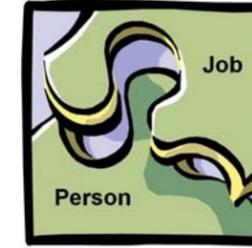


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## Ergonomics

“ The science of designing jobs, equipment, and workplaces to fit the person ”

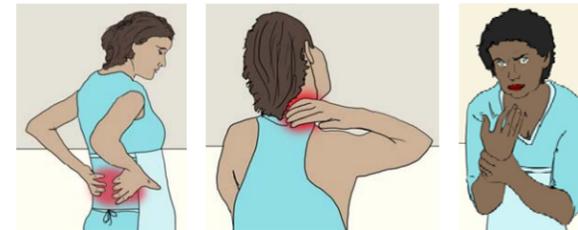


- Ergonomics principles are all around us, both at work and at home
- This pamphlet shows how ergonomics can be applied to housekeeping work

### Benefits of Ergonomics:

- Makes housekeeping work easier
- Reduces discomfort or pain
- Lowers risk of getting hurt
- Helps to get the job done faster
- Improves quality of the work

**Cumulative Trauma Injuries** develop over a period of weeks, months, or years and can result in back, wrist, shoulder, and neck pain



**Overexertion** can irritate the body's muscles and tendons, but tendons take much longer to heal

Some housekeeping tasks can put a lot of **pressure on the discs in the back**, which are the “shock absorbers” between vertebrae



### Examples



Lifting or pushing heavy objects

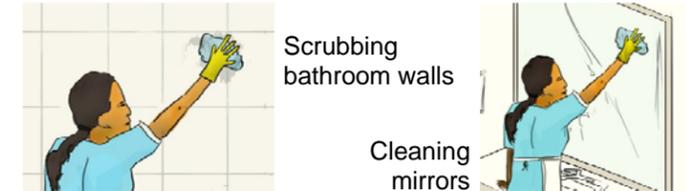
Twisting (e.g., to clean tubs)

Bending at the waist

Some housekeeping tasks can cause **pain in the neck and shoulders** (e.g., irritated, swollen, or torn tendons)

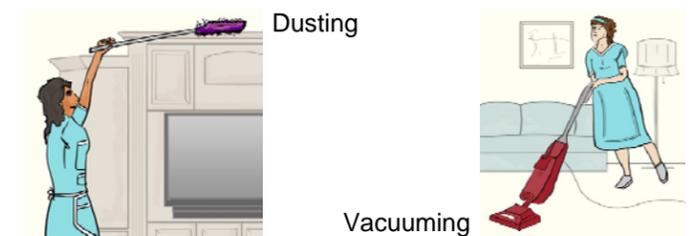


### Examples



Scrubbing bathroom walls

Cleaning mirrors



Dusting

Vacuuming

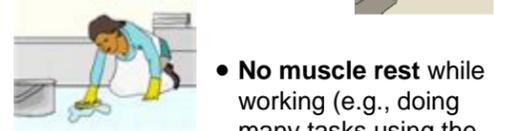
### Symptoms of Possible Cumulative Trauma Injury:

- Chronic, nagging pain or tenderness
- Muscle weakness
- Fatigue
- Joint stiffness or reduced flexibility
- Numbness in hands



### Injury Risk Factors Among Housekeepers:

- **Forceful exertions** (e.g., lifting heavy mattresses, pushing heavy supply carts, using vacuum cleaners)
- **Similar work postures** for long periods (e.g., standing, kneeling)
- **Awkward postures** (e.g., cleaning bathroom floors or bathtubs)
- **No muscle rest** while working (e.g., doing many tasks using the same hand or arm)
- **Repetitive activities** (e.g., putting on pillowcases, cleaning mirrors, vacuuming)



# Making Housekeeping Work Easier

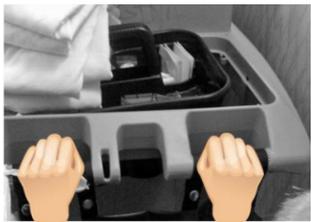
## Using Alternative Work Methods

### Moving Supply Carts



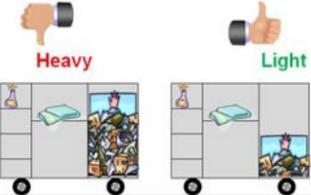
Store Heaviest or Most-Used Items between Your Hips and Chest

- More body strength at this part of the body



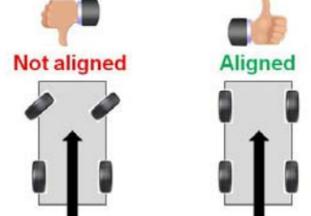
Push Cart Using Both Hands

- Keeps the body from twisting
- Distributes effort across both sides of the body



Empty Trash from Cart as Often as Possible

- Makes cart easier to push



Align Cart Wheels in the Direction of Movement

- Carts with aligned wheels are easier to push



Replenish Supply Cart a Few Times over Shift

- Less effort to push lighter cart
- A good, brief rest break



Report Cart Problems to Supervisor

- Repaired carts are easier to use

### Making Beds

Consider Using Different Postures



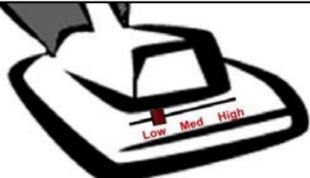

- Forward bending
- Twisted back
- No bending
- Closer to bed

### Vacuuming



Regularly Empty Vacuum Bag

- Lower force to push vacuum
- Less Fatigue



Choose Proper Height Setting for Carpet Conditions

- Lower force to push vacuum
- Less Fatigue

Line Up Body with Path of Vacuum



- Stress to shoulder
- Twisted back
- Less awkward posture of the shoulder
- Back not twisted

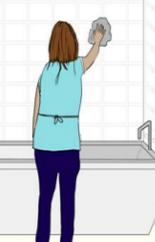


Alternate Vacuuming Between the Right and Left Hands

- Chance to rest frequently used muscles and body parts

### Cleaning Bathrooms

Stand Inside Tub to Clean Wall Tile (as long as there is no risk of slipping)




- Extended reaching
- Stress to shoulder
- Less reaching
- Less stress on shoulder

Keep Dirty Towels Off Floor as Much as Possible




- Repeated bending to pick up towels from floor
- Little or no bending to pick up towels

Do Not Carry Large or Heavy Weight; Make More Trips if Possible




- More stress on back & shoulders
- Less stress on back & shoulders

Do Work at Waist Level as Often as Possible




- Removing trash and replacing liners from floor
- Little/no bending to remove trash



Alternate Arms When Cleaning Surfaces

- Demands of task spread to both shoulders
- Gives each arm/shoulder time to rest

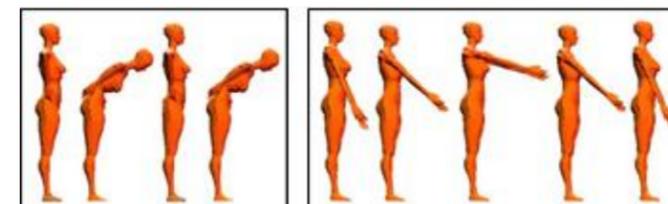
## Keeping Yourself Healthy & Injury-Free

### Remember To:

- Wear comfortable shoes at work



- "Warm-up" your body before starting work



Back

Arms and Shoulders

- Report any unusual aches or pains



In back

In neck

In shoulders

In elbows

- Communicate ways you have found to make the job easier



- Improve your well-being (e.g., balanced diet, regular exercise, plenty of sleep)

