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Safety Focused



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Presented by

Remote Work Ergonomics Tips

Ergonomics is defined as the science of fitting a workspace to an individual's needs. Ergonomics aims to increase efficiency and productivity while reducing discomfort and the likelihood of injury.

Many factors of ergonomics may be taken for granted in the workplace and be severely lacking in a remote work environment. What's worse, poor ergonomics can lead to not only reduced work efficiency, but also a number of health issues that may have long-lasting effects—including damage to your muscles, nerves, blood vessels, ligaments and tendons.

To maintain proper ergonomics while working remotely, follow these tips:

- **Utilize a sturdy chair**—Be sure to select a sturdy chair that supports the curvature of your spine. Your chair should also allow for adjustments so that your feet can rest flat on the floor and your thighs are parallel to it.
- **Select an effective work surface**—Use a work surface, such as a desk or table, that has space underneath for your legs and feet. If your work surface is too low, adjust your chair accordingly.
- **Position your screen properly**—Arrange your laptop or monitor screen directly in front of you and approximately an arm's length away with the top of the screen at, or slightly below, eye level.
- **Stay organized**—Make sure you keep all work files and materials organized so that you don't have to constantly bend and strain to reach them.
- **Use equipment safely**—Ensure you are using all workplace equipment correctly by reviewing the manufacturer's instructions. If any equipment requires repetitive motions, position yourself appropriately to reduce your risk of discomfort or cramping throughout the workday.

If you have any additional questions regarding remote work ergonomics, be sure to consult your supervisor.



Preventing Sprains and Strains at Work

Sprains and strains are common injuries for employees across industry lines. Sprains result from stretches or tears to a ligament (tissue that connects multiple bones at a joint), while strains are caused by stretches or tears to a muscle or tendon (tissue that connects muscle to bone).

Both sprains and strains can happen suddenly or over an extended period of time (e.g., days, weeks or even months). The likelihood of an employee like you experiencing a sprain or strain injury largely depends on the nature of your workplace tasks and responsibilities.

Specifically, tasks that require excessive force, frequent repetition or awkward positioning can elevate your risk of experiencing a sprain or strain injury on the job. What's more, ignoring a sprain or strain injury can lead to it worsening into a long-lasting, painful problem.

Nevertheless, there are several precautions that you can take to help lower your risk of experiencing a sprain or strain injury at work.

Consider the following guidance:

- **Practice healthy habits**—Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help keep your bones and muscles strong, reducing your risk of injury. Be sure to take care of your body by eating a balanced diet, getting regular exercise, drinking plenty of water and keeping a proper sleep schedule.
- **Stretch it out**—Tightened muscles are increasingly vulnerable to strain injuries. Try to loosen up before your work shift with some light exercise, followed by a full-body stretch session. Consider spending extra time stretching out muscles that you use frequently during work tasks.
- **Follow workplace protocols**—Be sure to follow all workplace health and safety protocols regarding ergonomics, body mechanics, machine usage and lifting techniques to help minimize your risk of injury.
- **Know the signs**—By recognizing the early symptoms of a sprain or strain injury, you will be able to detect the injury sooner and make necessary workplace adjustments before it becomes a serious concern. Common signs of a sprain and strain injury include excessive fatigue, discomfort, swelling, tenderness and limited range of motion.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of a sprain or strain injury, make sure you inform your supervisor and talk to a doctor.