

Workplace ergonomics: Find it and fix it

Good ergonomics is about fitting the job or tool to the worker—not the other way around. When work is done comfortably and safely, there's less stress on the body—and fewer strains and sprains.

This tool is designed to help you find and correct common ergonomic challenges in everyday tasks. Remember, solutions will be unique to each organization.

Find it 

Fix it 

Does the worker have to **lean, bend over, or reach up high** to do the task?

Raise or lower the working surface so elbows are closer to the body. Consider installing adjustable workstations.

How far out do workers reach to do the task?

Move the task closer, so elbows are closer to the body. Remove obstacles and adjust work surfaces as necessary.

Is the worker **in an awkward posture** while performing the task?

Rearrange space and materials, or modify tools, to encourage better postures. Consider installing in-line tools that allow for neutral wrist posture.

Do tasks require **reaching or** upper body **twists**?

Modify the job and materials, or rearrange the work area, to decrease the need for excessive reaching and upper body twisting.

Does the task include **repetitive motions**?

Change the task to offer a variety of movements. Limit the time spent performing a repetitive task so the worker has time to recover.

Are there **pushing or pulling** tasks?

Modify tools, equipment, or working surfaces to make pushing or pulling easier. (For example, consider a pull-assist or push-assist device.) Ensure carts, hand trucks, and other equipment are in good condition, especially wheels and hand grips.

Are **tools or workspace set up** so the task can be performed in a **logical sequence**?

Arrange tools and materials in the order in which they will be used, with frequently used items closer to the worker.

Is material handled **multiple times**?

Change the environment or task to streamline the process. (For example, stack materials directly into a cart so they can be moved easily, rather than temporarily stacking them on the floor.)

Is the load **heavy**?

Use lifting tools such as cranes for heavy items. Purchase items in smaller quantities, or smaller cases, so workers don't have to lift as much.

Do employees **stand in one place** for long periods?

Use anti-fatigue mats or sit-to-stand workstations. Rotate tasks, or redesign the task to promote neutral postures.

Are **important items**, such as start-stop buttons or indicator lights, **conveniently located**?

Relocate buttons or indicator lights if they require awkward postures or excessive reaching. Keep them in good condition, so they are easy to operate.

Keep in mind:

Neutral postures are better than awkward, static, or repetitive postures.

Reaching, twisting, stooping, bending, pushing, and pulling can add extra stress to the body.

About 51 pounds is the maximum limit for lifting in ideal conditions, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).