

YCPARMIA Safety Journal

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Work Giving You a Pain?

Think ergonomically

Ergonomics can help you avoid painful injuries to muscles and joints on the job. But what do you know about ergonomics? Choose a, b, or c for each question.

- 1. What is the best definition of ergonomics?**
 - a. Fitting the worker to the job
 - b. Fitting the job to the worker
 - c. Automating jobs to eliminate workers
- 2. Which is considered an ergonomic risk factor?**
 - a. Performing the same motion over and over
 - b. Constant lifting or pushing and pulling
 - c. Both a and b
- 3. Which are symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)?**
 - a. Pain, stiffness, or soreness in the back, neck, arm, leg, or joints
 - b. Chronic headache and dizzy spells
 - c. Drowsiness and fatigue
- 4. Which statement best describes good posture for preventing MSDs?**
 - a. Maintaining a neutral body posture
 - b. Keeping wrists bent when working
 - c. Keeping your back rigidly straight while standing or sitting
- 5. What is an example of an awkward posture that could lead to an injury?**
 - a. Resting your hand on a table to support you when you bend over
 - b. Working with your back or neck bent down or twisted
 - c. Squatting down to lift a load
- 6. How can you adjust your workspace to help prevent MSDs?**
 - a. Keep work items within easy reach.
 - b. Adjust work surfaces so your arms are fully extended at waist height.
 - c. Either a or b
- 7. How can you minimize the effect of repetition on your body?**
 - a. Work faster to get the job done more quickly.
 - b. Lift with your legs.
 - c. Alternate tasks.
- 8. How can you relieve the stress to your back when lifting heavy objects?**
 - a. Lift with your legs.
 - b. Bend at the waist when you lift.
 - c. Keep the load away from your body as you lift.

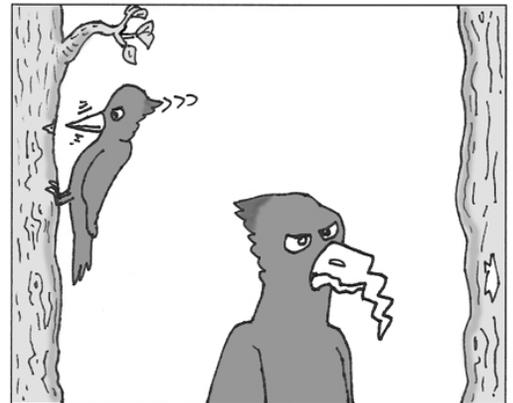
Answers: (1) b (2) c (3) a (4) a (5) b (6) a (7) c (8) a

HELP REDUCE ERGONOMIC RISKS

Despite reports that work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) have declined in recent years because of greater awareness and better workplace ergonomic programs, MSDs still affect workers in almost every industry and occupation. But, you can help reduce MSD risks.

Example: Office workers at one company talked to their supervisor about the stress they experienced from long hours of working at the computer. Bending and reaching to retrieve files was also a problem.

Solution: Their supervisor trained them to use the adjustments already available in their chairs, computers, and furniture systems. Furthermore, employees were encouraged to take microbreaks to stretch and relieve muscle tension caused by sitting and keyboarding. In addition, the supervisor explained how rearranging workstations could minimize reaching and bending.



Classic repetitive motion injury.

Cooperate to Keep Safe

Help your team prevent accidents

Even if you do everything right 100 percent of the time, never take a risk, and always play it absolutely safe, you still won't be completely safe on the job. That's because your safety depends to some extent on your co-workers, just as their safety depends in part on you. In other words, the only way for everybody to keep safe is to work together as a team. For example:

- 👉 **If you notice a hazard, correct it** if you can do so safely. If you can't, report it immediately.
- 👉 **If there's something you don't know about doing your job safely, ask** your supervisor. Your whole team depends on you to do the right thing.
- 👉 **If a co-worker asks for help, give it** willingly. That way when you need help, the favor will be returned.
- 👉 **If you see a co-worker struggling with a heavy object, lend a hand.**
- 👉 **If you make a mess, clean it up.** That goes for picking up tools, materials, trash, and scrap as well.
- 👉 **If something breaks while you're using it, get it to the proper person for repair.** If it's something big that's not working properly, like a machine, shut it down and tag it out so that a co-worker doesn't use it and get hurt.

As you can see, safety teamwork is the sensible thing to do.

Hands Up!

Don't let an accident rob you of a hand

Your hands are very versatile tools. They have:

- 👉 **Strength** to grasp, lift, push, pull, squeeze, and hold objects
- 👉 **Flexibility and sensitivity** to twist and touch, perform delicate tasks, and respond to pressure, temperature, or pain
- 👉 **Coordination** to perform complicated tasks like typing, assembling parts, or playing the piano

Unfortunately, hands are also very vulnerable to workplace injuries, such as:

- Amputations
- Laceration
- Burns
- Fractures
- Dermatitis
- Punctures
- Carpal tunnel syndrome

Protect your hands by taking these safety precautions:

- 👉 **Wear gloves** to protect against chemicals, heat, and rough or sharp surfaces.
- 👉 **Make sure machine guards are in place** and operating properly.
- 👉 **Pay attention to where your hands are while you work**, especially around machinery.
- 👉 **Watch out for pinchpoints** so that your hands and fingers don't get crushed between two surfaces.
- 👉 **Clean and bandage cuts and scrapes** promptly.
- 👉 **Wash hands carefully** after using irritants or other hazardous chemicals.

WATCH OUT FOR PINCHPOINTS!

South Florida refuse collection truck mechanic Raul Figueroa was working on a truck when somehow the ram arm that lifts Dumpsters to the bin became actuated. The arm rose upward, trapping Figueroa between the cab and cargo bin. Horrified co-workers later found his body, sliced in two. Mercifully, he died instantly.

This terrible accident is a particularly tragic example of a "pinchpoint" or "caught-between" accident. In such events, a worker is caught between two surfaces, one usually moving with great force. The result ranges from skin damage and crushed bones to amputation or death—as in Figueroa's case.

To avoid machinery pinchpoints, OSHA says to pay attention to three areas:

1. **Point of operation**, which is the part of a machine at which work is performed. A slot into which a worker inserts or re-moves product would be such a point of operation, as would the table on which a saw or grinder descends to do its work.
2. **Power transmission apparatus.** Though removed from the point at which work is done, pulleys, gears, belts, chains, or other devices that move power into the machine also can snag or tangle those who run them, and even those nearby.
3. **Other moving parts.** Even if they don't actually do work or move power, such devices as cooling fans or even revolving doors can also cause pinchpoint and caught-between injuries.

Back Up Your Back

Use this safe lifting checklist

Back problems are among the most common workplace musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). And one of the most common reasons for back injuries is improper lifting. Follow this checklist to lift properly.

- Stand close to the load** with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Bend your knees** and squat all the way down, keeping your back straight.
- Grip the load firmly** with both hands.
- Place your hands on diagonally opposite corners** so that one hand pulls the load toward you and the other one lifts.
- Pull the load close** to your body.
- Keep your weight centered over your feet** with your arms and elbows tucked into your sides.
- Keep your back straight** and let your legs push your body up smoothly.
- Maintain a good grip on the load** and keep it close to your body, no more than waist high, as you carry it.
- Turn by moving your feet in the direction you want to go**, not by twisting your body in that direction.
- Lower the load slowly** when you reach your destination, reversing your lifting motion, which means bending your knees and letting your legs bear the weight as you lower the load.

Safety Is a Way of Life

A safe workplace builds successful lives

OSHA says that safe workplaces provide the “consistency and reliability needed to build a community and grow a business.” We agree. We believe that the combination of OSHA regulations, our safety and health policies and programs, and your active participation mean fewer accidents and injuries and a better place for all of us to work.

But a safe workplace does more than that. It also promotes better, more successful lives for everyone who works here. A safe workplace provides an environment in which our jobs become a way to make a *good* life—not just a living—for ourselves and our families.

Still not convinced? Think about this. According to OSHA, a worker who suffers a disabling injury can lose 40 percent of his or her income over 5 years. Families can lose even more because of the increased stress, conflict, and divorce associated with occupational injury and illness.

You work hard every day so that you can build a better life for your family. Both our organization and OSHA work hard, too, to make sure that you return to your family in the same condition you begin your day. As OSHA says, “Every injury prevented is a person kept whole; every life saved is a family preserved intact.” That’s a great way to think about safety!



TOP THREE EXCUSES FOR NOT WEARING PPE

Do you always wear assigned personal protective equipment (PPE) on the job? Workplace studies show that people often don’t bother to wear PPE. When asked why, they give a lot of different reasons.

One of the more recent surveys conducted by safety products maker Kimberly-Clark cites three big reasons:

Reason Number 1

(62 percent of respondents)

“PPE is uncomfortable.”

OK. Then talk to your supervisor. Maybe you can get a better fit that will be more comfortable. But even if you can’t improve the comfort of your PPE significantly, wear it anyway. You won’t be comfortable when you’re injured or get sick and end up in the hospital either. And that’s a distinct possibility if you fail to wear required PPE.

Reason Number 2

“PPE is not necessary for the work.”

If you’ve been assigned PPE and required to use it, then it *is* necessary for your work and your safety. PPE provides a barrier between you and workplace hazards. Don’t lose an eye, be permanently disabled by a head injury, or develop a deadly disease just because you figure that no matter what anybody tells you, you don’t need to bother wearing assigned PPE.

Reason Number 3

“It’s unattractive looking.”

A lot of PPE is being designed to be more stylish. But the real issue is would you rather look good or get hurt? You won’t look so hot wrapped up in bandages.

Back-to-School Safety

Make it a safe time for kids

Follow these back-to-school safety tips from the Michigan State Police Troopers.

If your kids take the bus, review safety rules with them before the first day of school. The Michigan Troopers remind you that “the greatest risk for these children is not riding the bus, but when they are approaching or leaving the bus.” To prevent accidents, say the Troopers, teach your kids to:

- 🔔 Arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- 🔔 Stand at least 6 feet from the street or curb.
- 🔔 Wait to cross the road or enter the bus until the driver signals that it’s OK.
- 🔔 Never walk behind or along the side of the bus (the driver can’t see kids there).
- 🔔 Stay seated on the bus.

As a driver, remember these important back-to-school safety tips:

- 🔔 Approach school buses cautiously.
- 🔔 Prepare to stop when a slowing bus has its overhead yellow lights flashing.
- 🔔 Come to a *complete* stop at least 20 feet away from the bus when its overhead red lights are flashing.
- 🔔 Be especially alert where children congregate near bus stops.
- 🔔 Watch for kids on bikes or on foot who may dart into the road without warning.



Online Safety Training

www.ycparmia.com

If you haven’t tried the safety training offered at ycparmia.com, give it a try. You can take a new class each month, at your own pace, and we will notify your employer of each class you complete. You can improve your understanding of a variety of important safety issues during quiet times at your computer.

It’s free. It’s easy. And you can complete the classes all at once, or a little at a time. Whatever works best for you.

Why not give it a try? We think you’ll like it.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY MYTHS

Did you know that electricity is the fifth largest workplace killer? Perhaps that’s because many people have some very dangerous misconceptions about electricity.

For example:

☒ **Normal household/workplace current can cause only a mild shock.**

Even 110-120 volts can be deadly. It depends largely on what resistance the person’s body has to the current, the body part in contact, the duration of the exposure, and other conditions such as the presence of moisture. Resistance is measured in ohms. A person’s body may naturally have a resistance of 100,000 ohms. But on a damp day, that resistance can drop to just 1,000 ohms.

☒ **All individuals are similarly affected by contact with current.**

Different people may react differently to the same exposure. Especially at risk are those with heart problems. Even a mild shock can cause a heart attack, often fatal.

☒ **“If I don’t touch it, I can’t be hurt by it.”**

Electricity can jump across an air space, in what’s called an arc flash, with a temperature three times that at the surface of the sun.

☒ **“A disconnected circuit is safe to work on.”**

Not the case if the circuit includes batteries or capacitors that store electricity and can release it suddenly even if the “plug” is no longer in the wall. This is the reason TV sets and similar devices carry “Do Not Open” warnings on their cases. Even junked sets can be dangerous.