Housekeepers: 
Practices to Improve Health & Safety using Ergonomics

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

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)
- Repetitive activities (e.g., putting on pillowcases, cleaning mirrors, vacuuming)
- No muscle rest while working (e.g., doing many tasks using the same hand or arm)

Institute for Ergonomics
The Ohio State University
1971 Neil Ave, 210 Baker Systems
Columbus, OH 43210

phone: 614-292-4565
email: ergonomics@osu.edu
web: www.ergonomics.osu.edu

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The Occupational Safety and Health Administration

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

OSHA Examples

- Scrubbing bathroom walls
- Cleaning mirrors
- Dusting
- Vacuuming

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)
### Making Housekeeping Work Easier

#### Using Alternative Work Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moving Supply Carts</th>
<th>Making Beds</th>
<th>Cleaning Bathrooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Store Heaviest or Most-Used Items between Your Hips and Chest</strong>&lt;br&gt;More body strength at this part of the body</td>
<td><strong>Consider Using Different Postures</strong>&lt;br&gt;Forward bending&lt;br&gt;Twisted back&lt;br&gt;No bending&lt;br&gt;Closer to bed</td>
<td><strong>Stand inside Tub to Clean Wall Tile</strong>&lt;br&gt;as long as there is no risk of slipping&lt;br&gt; Extended reaching&lt;br&gt;Stress to shoulder&lt;br&gt;Less reaching&lt;br&gt;Less stress on shoulder&lt;br&gt;Inside tub&lt;br&gt;Outside of tub&lt;br&gt;Life instant оформление&lt;br&gt;Life instant оформление</td>
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<td><strong>Push Cart Using Both Hands</strong>&lt;br&gt;Keeps the body from twisting&lt;br&gt;Distributes effort across both sides of the body</td>
<td><strong>Vacuuming</strong>&lt;br&gt;Heavy&lt;br&gt;Light&lt;br&gt;Regularly Empty Vacuum Bag&lt;br&gt;Lower force to push vacuum&lt;br&gt;Less Fatigue</td>
<td><strong>Keep Dirty Towels Off Floor as Much as Possible</strong>&lt;br&gt;Repeated bending to pick up towels from floor&lt;br&gt;Little or no bending to pick up towels</td>
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<td><strong>Empty Trash from Cart as Often as Possible</strong>&lt;br&gt;Makes cart easier to push</td>
<td><strong>Choose Proper Height Setting for Carpet Conditions</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lower force to push vacuum&lt;br&gt;Less Fatigue</td>
<td><strong>Do Not Carry Large or Heavy Weight; Make More Trips if Possible</strong>&lt;br&gt;One large pile of wet, dirty towels&lt;br&gt;More stress on back &amp; shoulders&lt;br&gt;Less stress on back &amp; shoulders&lt;br&gt;Two small piles of wet, dirty towels</td>
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<td><strong>Align Cart Wheels in the Direction of Movement</strong>&lt;br&gt;Carts with aligned wheels are easier to push</td>
<td><strong>Line Up Body with Path of Vacuum</strong>&lt;br&gt;Stress to shoulder&lt;br&gt;Twisted back&lt;br&gt;Less awkward posture of the shoulder&lt;br&gt;Back not twisted</td>
<td><strong>Do Work at Waist Level as Often as Possible</strong>&lt;br&gt;On floor&lt;br&gt;Removing trash and replacing liners from floor&lt;br&gt;Little/no bending to remove trash&lt;br&gt;Above floor&lt;br&gt;Alternate arms when cleaning surfaces&lt;br&gt;Demands of task spread to both shoulders&lt;br&gt;Gives each arm/shoulder time to rest</td>
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<td><strong>Replenish Supply Cart a Few Times over Shift</strong>&lt;br&gt;Less effort to push lighter cart&lt;br&gt;A good, brief rest break</td>
<td><strong>Alternate Vacuuming Between the Right and Left Hands</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chance to rest frequently used muscles and body parts</td>
<td><strong>Alternate Arms When Cleaning Surfaces</strong>&lt;br&gt;Demands of task spread to both shoulders&lt;br&gt;Gives each arm/shoulder time to rest</td>
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<td><strong>Report Cart Problems to Supervisor</strong>&lt;br&gt;Repaired carts are easier to use</td>
<td><strong>Remember To:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Wear comfortable shoes at work&lt;br&gt;&quot;Warm-up&quot; your body before starting work&lt;br&gt;Report any unusual aches or pains&lt;br&gt;Communicate ways you have found to make the job easier&lt;br&gt;Improve your well-being (e.g., balanced diet, regular exercise, plenty of sleep)</td>
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