

IMMIGRANT WORKERS' HEALTH & SAFETY 1-HOUR ERGONOMICS TRAINING FOR GENERAL INDUSTRY

GOAL: This training is designed for a one-hour session with immigrant workers from a variety of industries and from multiple employers. The material was developed-with assistance from various resources including:

- OSHA - Guidelines for Retail Grocery Stores. Ergonomics for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders (2004)
- Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA), Garment Worker Ergonomic Training (2009)
- University of Louisville Research Foundation – Ergonomics for Managers and Employees in Small Business Foundries (2008)
- NIOSH - “Elements of ergonomics programs”. DHHS-NIOSH. Pub. No 97-117 and Simple Solutions Ergonomics for Construction Workers, Pub. No 2007-122
- Health and Safety Executive - Getting to Grips with Manual Handling: A Short Guide. 2004

At the end of the training, workers should be able to: (1) identify the activities that cause musculoskeletal pain; (2) learn visually why the pain happens and potential serious effects; 3) come up with various ways to safeguard against such activities; and (4) know of their basic right to a safe workplace, regardless of immigration status.

I. Introduction and Icebreaker [5 minutes]

Introduce ourselves and what we will be talking about: worker health and safety / seguridad y salud laboral. Review the goals of the day:

Make the Road New York builds the power of Latino and working class communities to achieve dignity and justice through organizing, policy innovation, transformative education, and survival services. With over 10,000 members at our four community-based centers, we organize around workers' rights issues – including helping workers fight to for workplaces that are safe and healthy.

1. Icebreaker: Have the participants stand up and run through some stretching exercises for various parts of the body including the neck, back, shoulders and hands. Some examples of potential exercises to be used include:

Head: Have participants slowly drop their heads forward gently stretching their necks and hold for 5-10 seconds, return to neutral position and then slowly let their heads fall backward. Repeat exercise and do the same to tilt head to the left and right. You can also have them turn their head to the left and right.

Shoulders and Arms: Have participants raise their shoulders towards their ears and hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat. Next, have them roll their shoulders backwards in a circular motion and then forwards. To stretch their arms, have participants raise their arms above their heads and interlock

This material was produced under grant SH22301-11-60-F-36 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. It does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Make the Road New York ■ 1-Hour Ergonomics for General Industry Workshop

fingers with their palms upward and hold position for 5-10 seconds. In the same manner have them stretch their arms behind their backs and then out in front of them. Repeat as needed.

Wrists and hands: For the hands, have participants straighten and separate their fingers and then bend their fingers and the knuckles and finally create a fist. Hold each pose for 5-10 seconds. For wrists, place palms together with the elbows out and slowly push the fingers and palms together. Next with arms extended forward and elbow straight, grab the left hand with the right and slowly bend the left wrist downward until there's tension. Do the same with the right hand and wrist. Hold these positions for 5-10 seconds and repeat.

Back: Have participants stand with legs slightly apart and hands at the waist. Slowly have them bend forward, to the sides and back. Next, do a seated spinal twist with participants in chairs and have them slowly twist to the right and left, grabbing the back of the seat and without moving their hips. . Hold these positions for 5-10 seconds and repeat.

2. Explain that today we are going to talk about workplace hazards that can cause pain to your muscles and joints. Usually, people don't consider the activities that cause this kind of pain as dangerous. When you think of workplace hazards you might think of really dangerous situations like working on a scaffold or with chemicals or electrical wires. But other daily situations and activities at work that cause pain to your muscles and joints can be just as dangerous and have serious long-term effects if not addressed.

II. Pre Test (5 Minutes)

Administer the pre-test which is the same as the post-test. Explain that this is not a formal test and that we simply want to know what participants already know before the training and what they learn afterwards.

III. Body Mapping Hazard Identification – Small Group Activity [20 minutes]

GOAL: for participants to start identifying pains to muscles and joints and the activities that cause the pain in their own workplaces.

Small Group Activity: Break the group into smaller groups based on the industry in which they work and distribute **HANDOUT 1, Body Map**, Ask participants to identify the parts of the body where they have felt pain, numbness, tingling, weakness, swelling, or stiffness and mark the map with dots, For each dot, have them list the specific activities at work that caused those pains. Have different colored dots labeled with very mild pain, mild pain, moderate pain, severe pain to draw out the different levels of pain, stiffness etc. that people are experiencing.

Discussion: After you see that a large portion of the group has finished, ask for groups to share their experience in work places and what impact did it had on their health or safety. Use butcher paper to record parts of the body affected and activities that caused the pain. Ensure that the following activities are captured – Grabbing with excessive force, Lifting, Leaning, Twisting body, Working on the floor/on your knees, Squatting, Bending, Working with objects overhead, Excessive reaching, Repetitive Movements, Pushing/Pulling, Working with Vibrating tools and/or objects .

IV. Ergonomics for General Industry PowerPoint Presentation [15 minutes]

This material was produced under grant SH22301-11-60-F-36 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. It does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Make the Road New York ■ 1-Hour Ergonomics for General Industry Workshop

Next pass out **Handout 2** Ergonomics PowerPoint Slides and explain that we are going to learn about our body's anatomy and why certain work activities cause pain to our muscles and joints.

Begin by explaining that ergonomics (or human factors) is the scientific discipline concerned with the understanding of interactions among humans and other elements of a system, and the profession that applies theory, principles, data and methods to design in order to optimize human well-being and overall system performance. Ergonomists contribute to the design and evaluation of tasks, jobs, products, environments and systems in order to make them compatible with the needs, abilities and limitations of people.¹

In the workplace, Ergonomics is the science of fitting workplace conditions and job demands to the capabilities of the working population

Please refer to Power Point presentation and notes.

V. Solutions and Preventing injury – Large Group Discussion [15 minutes]

Following the anatomy discussion ask for ideas for what people can do to reduce the amount of tension to these areas of our bodies in the workplace. Record answers on Butcher paper. Continue to the solutions portion of the presentation following trainer notes

Make sure to ask the group which solutions are easier to implement and which ones are harder. Those that are controlled by the employer require taking action.

VI. Evaluation and Post Test [10 minutes]

Explain the purpose of the Post Test to assess what participants have learned during the training. Distribute evaluation sheets for participants to complete. Collect sheets. If future trainings are scheduled, announce dates and times to group.

¹ Source: Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (HFES).
<http://www.hfes.org/Web/EducationalResources/HFEdefinitionsmain.html>