

# Ergonomic Hazards

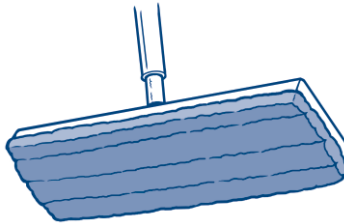
Ergonomic injuries include strains, sprains, and other problems. These injuries can be caused by: performing the same motion over and over again (such as vacuuming); using physical force (lifting heavy objects); or being in an awkward position (twisting your body to reach a light bulb).

Mopping floors can cause aches and pains. Below is a list of possible solutions to make mopping safer. Which of these solutions best protects you? Which is the least protective?

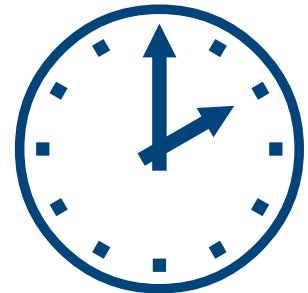
## Solutions:



**A.** Use padded gloves to improve grip and comfort.



**B.** Use lightweight mops that pivot easily.



**C.** Take rest breaks.

**Answers:**  
Most protective: Use lightweight mops.  
Least protective: Use padded gloves.

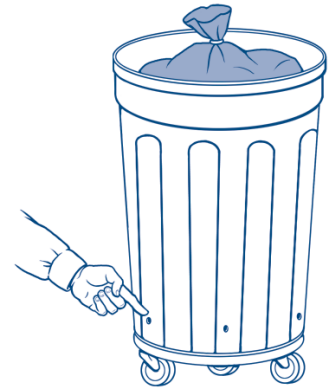
## Discussion Questions for Management & Employees

1. Whenever possible, it is best to make the work easier or safer (such as by using lightweight mops) rather than rely on protective gear (such as padded gloves). Why is this?
2. What concerns do you have about repetitive tasks, heavy lifting, awkward positions, or other ergonomic issues? Why?
3. What can management and employees do to prevent ergonomic injuries? (Flip this page over for tips on preventing ergonomic injuries. →)

# Ergonomic Hazards

## Management Can Make the Workplace Safer

- D Provide microfiber mops and long-handled scrubbers that are lightweight and pivot easily.
- D Drill holes into the bottom of garbage barrels (see picture). This makes it easier to lift garbage bags out of the barrel.
- D Place a step-up platform next to the dumpster.
- D For backpack vacuums, check proper fit for each employee. The weight should primarily rest on the hips, not the shoulders.
- D Provide a dolly or rolling cart for moving heavy objects.



## Employees Can Follow Safe Work Practices

- D Take rest breaks. Rotate tasks. Alternate between the left and right hands.
- D Keep your back and wrists straight. Keep your elbows close to your body.
- D Avoid extreme reaches.
- D For backpack vacuums, empty the vacuum bag often to lighten the vacuum.
- D Pad the mop handle and bucket handle.
- D Report early symptoms, such as discomfort or numbness, to your supervisor. Address symptoms and hazards quickly.

## Employees Can Use Protective Clothing & Equipment

- D Use padded gloves to improve grip and comfort.
- D Use knee pads when kneeling. Or use a folded towel.

### Tips on Lifting

1. Planning your lift: Get help when possible. Use a dolly or cart. Don't carry too much.
2. Lifting: Get close to the load. Lift with your legs, not your back. Bend your knees.
3. Moving the load: Keep the load close to your body. Don't twist your body.
4. Lowering: Let your leg muscles carry it down. Be sure fingers and toes are clear.

