



WEEKLY SAFETY MEETING

All Euramax Subsidiaries

REPETITIVE MOTION INJURIES / ERGONOMICS

Safety Meeting Contents

- Meeting Notice
- Leaders Guide
- Employee Handout
- Employee Quiz
- Meeting Sign-In Sheet
- Employee Puzzle

PRIOR TO THE WEEKLY MEETING:

- Post the meeting notice by the timeclock
- Read through the Leaders Guide and Employee Handout to familiarize yourself with the topic for the week
- Make copies of the employee handout (one for each employee)
- Make copies of the employee quiz (one for each employee)
- Make copies of the weekly puzzle (one for each employee)

AT THE SAFETY MEETING:

- Pass around the meeting sign-in sheet – ensure all employees present at the meeting print and sign their names
- Pass out the employee hand-out
- Pass out the employee quiz
- Pass out the weekly puzzle
- Keep the meeting simple
- Encourage discussion and questions

WEEKLY SAFETY MEETING NOTICE

THIS WEEK, OUR SAFETY MEETING WILL COVER
REPETITIVE MOTION INJURIES/ERGONOMICS

TIME: _____

DATE: _____

PLACE: _____

WEEKLY SAFETY MEETING

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REPETITIVE MOTION INJURIES/ERGONOMICS

Leaders Guide

EURAMAX PROCEDURE REFERENCE:

H-1.0: Lifting Procedure

MEETING OBJECTIVE:

Repetitive motion injury (RMI) is a serious health and safety problem that affects millions of people. Once a worker is stricken with this type of injury, he or she may lose a great deal of time from the job while recovering and receiving treatment. There's even the possibility that the worker might have to stop performing some tasks permanently. Prevention is clearly the best cure for this type of injury. The purpose of this meeting is to inform employees about the dangers of repetitive motion injury and show them the steps they can take to prevent it.

Ergonomics is the applied science of equipment design and arrangement, intended to maximize productivity by reducing operator fatigue and discomfort. Injuries related to ergonomics are those caused by over-use, impact, vibration, repetition, forceful exertion. Largely injuries of the musculoskeletal systems of the body, these injuries include carpal tunnel syndrome, bursitis, tenosynovitis, tendinitis and others. These problems affect the muscles, ligaments and tendons as well as the nerves and blood vessels.

MEETING PREPARATION:

Read the Euramax procedure, understand the contents, and ensure compliance.

Make a list of jobs at your facility that involve repetitive motion. Be prepared to discuss methods for avoiding injury.

Use a flip chart during the discussion to write key points and employee responses. This technique visually reinforces your instruction.

MATERIALS CHECKLIST:

List of jobs involving repetitive motion

Flip chart and marking pens



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Leaders Guide

MEETING

INTRODUCTION

While you're doing your job or completing tasks at home, you may be performing certain actions and movements over and over. If you're also using excessive force, failing to condition or relax your muscles sufficiently, or completing that task in a work area that hasn't been adjusted properly, you may be setting yourself up for a repetitive motion injury. Today, you'll learn what causes repetitive motion injury--known as RMI--and the steps you can take to prevent it.

Repetitive motion injury is common among workers who consistently perform tasks that require them to repeat the same movements over and over. The pain associated with repetitive motion injury most often affects the tendons, nerves, and muscles of the hands, wrists, elbows, arms, neck, and lower back.

Estimates of the costs associated with work-related RMI's range from 13 billion to \$54 billion per year. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, about one-third of all occupational injuries and illnesses are due to overexertion or repetitive motion. Numerous case studies show that increased ergonomics-oriented awareness, training, and hazard reduction will reduce injuries, lost work time, and associated costs.

Repetitive motion injury isn't new. It used to be referred to as "washerwoman's thumb" or "telegraph operator's cramp." But today, with the spread of automation and increased production demands, the incidence of this syndrome has rapidly increased. Today, hundreds of thousands of cases are reported every year. If the pain associated with this injury is ignored, permanent damage can result. Fortunately, treatment can help – and establishing better work habits can prevent similar problems in the future.

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Ergonomics-related injuries can be reduced by improvements in equipment and work practices. An example is work in a nursing home, where an employee is more likely to be injured than is a worker in a coal mine or steel mill. The most common injury for a nursing home worker is back injury caused by lifting patients. These injuries can be reduced significantly by use of mechanical lifting and transfer devices for moving patients in and out of beds and chairs.

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Question: What are some common causes of repetitive motion injury?

Answer: Performing tasks that require you to repeat the same movements over and over

Using a chair that's improperly adjusted

Completing tasks in an improperly arranged work area

Neglecting to vary tasks

Varying one repetitive job with another that uses similar motions

Using excessive force when performing a repetitive task

Twisting

Neglecting to rest your body sufficiently when performing repetitive work

Question: What are some of the symptoms of repetitive motion injury?

Answer: Difficulty gripping objects

A tingling or burning sensation in the affected area

Numbness

Pain that occurs when you're trying to sleep

Question: You should never ignore these symptoms, or related symptoms. Failure to take action when repetitive motion injury exists can lead to several serious physical problems. What are some of these problems?

Answer: Loss of muscle strength

Severe pain in the affected area that may extend to other areas

Nerve damage

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Permanent loss of sensation and muscle control

Question: How can you protect yourself against ergonomics-related injury?

Answer: Pay attention to how you do your job. Be aware of long reaches for materials, repetitive motions and twisting movements while carrying an object.

Arrange your work station for the best placement of tools and supplies. Things you use frequently should be within easy reach. Infrequently-used items should be stored out of your way.

Use mechanical equipment for lifting and moving items whenever possible. An electrical lift table and a hand cart can save your back. Talk to your supervisor if you see a need for this equipment.

Use good posture. Sit, stand and walk with your back relatively straight, while maintaining the natural curves at the neck and lower back.

Question: **How can good work habits help prevent repetitive motion injury?**

Answer: When you take scheduled breaks, or switch to another task that uses different motions, you can give the muscles and tendons you've been using the opportunity to rest.

Question: **What can you do when you can't vary tasks or take a break?**

Answer: You can work out the tension that builds up in your hands, wrists, arms, neck, and shoulders by performing a few quick exercises. For example, you can...

Shake out your hands

Roll your shoulders forward and back

Gently rotate your wrists

Raise your arms over your head to loosen up your shoulders

Gently roll your head to loosen up your neck

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Question: Why is it important to try to keep your wrists in a neutral position when completing a task?

Answer: If you keep your wrists in an awkward or uncomfortable position when performing a particular motion over and over, you put undue pressure on the tendons within your wrist. These tendons become inflamed and press on the nerves, causing pain.

Question: Why is it important to use the right tool for the job?

Answer: Failing to use the right tool may cause you to grip objects more tightly than you should. That means you're putting unnecessary strain on muscles and tendons—possibly contributing to a painful injury.

Question: Why is it better to adjust a task to you, whenever possible, rather than vice versa?

Answer: Ergonomic measures for preventing RMI's actually pay off in terms of reducing worker injuries, lost work time, and insurance and medical costs. When you try to adjust yourself to a particular task, you may be forcing yourself to work in an awkward position for a long period of time. This causes unnecessary stress and strain. Instead, you should do what you can to adjust the task to you.

Explain that employees should discuss adjustments with you if they involve changes in work procedures.

Question: What else can you do to avoid repetitive motion injury?

Answer: Check with me before you begin a new task. I might have suggestions for safer, more efficient ways to work. Also, let me know right away if you're having difficulty performing a task. For example, if you find yourself working in an awkward position for long periods, talk to me before you start to experience stress and pain.

Review the employee handout: How to Prevent Sprains, Strains, and Other Injuries. Ask the employees to list additional items. Write down these items on the flip chart.

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SUMMARY:

Awareness is the key to preventing RMI. Taking the steps we've talked about today should help you prevent the occurrence--or reoccurrence--of this serious, and often disabling, form of injury. And remember that if you are affected by the type of symptoms we discussed today, make sure you notify your supervisor immediately.

EMPLOYEE HANDOUT

- A. Employee Handout
- B. Repetitive Motion/Ergonomics Safety Quiz
- C. Repetitive Motion/Ergonomics Safety Crossword

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1. body
- 2. gloves, circulation
- 3. kneepads
- 4. step stool
- 5. kneeler, stool
- 6. kneeling, squatting, reaching
- 7. cart
- 8. wheels, Wheels
- 9. easy reach
- 10. left-handed cutter
- 11. sharp, dull
- 12. debris, spills
- 13. handholds
- 14. lighter
- 15. larger
- 16. lifting tasks
- 17. aisles
- 18. scissor-lift

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Leaders Guide

Employee Puzzle Answers

Ergonomics 1



REPETITIVE MOTION INJURIES/ERGONOMICS
Leaders Guide
Employee Puzzle Answers
Ergonomics 2

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REPETITIVE MOTION INJURIES/ERGONOMICS

Employee Handout

HOW TO PREVENT SPRAINS, STRAINS AND OTHER INJURIES

- Keep cases close to the body when lifting and carrying in order to reduce stress on the back.
- Use thermal gloves when stocking cold items. Cold temperatures can reduce circulation, causing stress on the hands.
- Use kneepads when stocking low shelves for long periods of time. This reduces the stress on the knees and legs when kneeling.
- Use a step stool to reach items on the top of pallets or on high shelves.
- Use a kneeler or stool when working at low shelves for long periods of time. This reduces stress on the knees and legs when squatting and kneeling.
- Rotate stocking tasks to avoid prolonged kneeling, squatting and overhead reaching
- Use a cart to move items from the pallet to the shelving or case where they are stocked.
- Keep cart wheels well maintained. Wheels that are in poor repair can make carts difficult to push. Racks or carts with bad wheels should be removed from service until they can be repaired.
- Arrange shelves so that heavy items and fast-moving items are stored within easy reach. This reduces the stress on the body caused by bending or reaching overhead.
- Use the correct safety cutter for the job. Be sure to use a left-handed cutter if you are left handed.
- Keep safety cutters sharp. Using dull tools requires more force. Replace cutter blades often.
- Report improperly stacked pallets to the supplier to reduce future problems.
- Ensure that floors are free of debris and spills. Report any floor problems that need repair immediately.
- Use boxes or totes with handholds, where suitable.
- Work with suppliers to get lighter weight that is manually lifted.
- Use carts with larger wheels so they are easier to push. Carts with raised bottom shelves are recommended so you can maintain a more neutral body position when lifting or placing items.
- Ensure that there is adequate room around carts and pallets for lifting tasks. You should be able to walk around the pallet or cart, rather than reaching or bending.
- Avoid congestion in aisles so you have adequate room to sort cases, open cases, mark merchandise and stock shelves.
- We'll try to equip stockrooms and central processing areas with roller bed conveyors and turntables to reduce lifting and carrying. Maintain turntables so they move easily with little force applied. Maintain rollers to reduce the pushing and pulling forces needed to handle cases.
- If a turntable is not used, place a flat piece on stainless steel over the end section of the roller bed, preferably with nonstick coating, to allow cases to be turned easily. The metal surface should allow the cases to be easily pushed onto the roller bed.
- Use a powered hand jack or scissors-lift to raise pallets to waist height.
- Work with suppliers to obtain freight with pallet load heights that are within easy reach.

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REPETITIVE MOTION INJURIES / ERGONOMIC

Quiz

Test Your Ergonomics Know-How

See what you know about good ergonomics by filling in the blanks in the following list of ergonomic tips:

1. Keep cases close to the _____ when lifting and carrying in order to reduce stress to the back.
2. Use thermal _____ when stocking cold items. Cold temperatures can reduce _____, causing stress on the hands.
3. Use _____ when stocking low shelves for long periods of time. This reduces the stress on the knees and legs when kneeling.
4. Use a _____ _____ to reach items on the top of pallets or on high selves.
5. Use a _____ or _____ when working at low shelves for long periods of time. This reduces stress on the knees and legs when squatting and kneeling.
6. Rotate stocking tasks to avoid prolonged _____, _____ and overhead _____.
7. Use a _____ to move items from the pallet to the shelving or case where they are stocked.
8. Keep cart _____ well maintained. _____ that are in poor repair can make carts difficult to push.
9. Arrange shelves so that heavy items and fast-moving items are stored within _____ _____. This reduces the stress on the body caused by bending or reaching overhead.
10. Use the correct safety cutter for the job. Be sure to use a _____ _____ if you are left-handed.
11. Keep safety cutters _____. Using _____ tools requires more force. Replace cutter blades often.

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Quiz

12. Make sure floors are free of _____ and _____. Report any floor problems that need repair immediately.
13. Use boxes or totes with _____, where suitable.
14. Work with suppliers to get _____ boxes to reduce the weight manually lifted.
15. Use carts with _____ wheels so they are easier to push.
16. Ensure that there is adequate room around carts and pallets for _____.
17. Avoid congestion in _____ so you have adequate room to sort cases, open cases, mark merchandise and stock shelves.
18. Use a powered hand jack or _____ to raise pallets to waist height. This prevents picking up cases with a bent back.



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REPETITIVE MOTION INJURIES/ERGONOMICS

Meeting Sign In Sheet

LOCATION _____

MEETING DATE _____ MEETING CONDUCTED BY _____

CONTENTS OF MEETING _____
 (Attach Handouts, etc.) _____

ATTENDEES:

Name (Print)	Signature	Name (Print)	Signature
1 _____	_____	22 _____	_____
2 _____	_____	23 _____	_____
3 _____	_____	24 _____	_____
4 _____	_____	25 _____	_____
5 _____	_____	26 _____	_____
6 _____	_____	27 _____	_____
7 _____	_____	28 _____	_____
8 _____	_____	29 _____	_____
9 _____	_____	30 _____	_____
10 _____	_____	31 _____	_____
11 _____	_____	32 _____	_____
12 _____	_____	33 _____	_____
13 _____	_____	34 _____	_____
14 _____	_____	35 _____	_____
15 _____	_____	36 _____	_____
16 _____	_____	37 _____	_____
17 _____	_____	38 _____	_____
18 _____	_____	39 _____	_____
19 _____	_____	40 _____	_____
20 _____	_____	41 _____	_____
21 _____	_____	42 _____	_____

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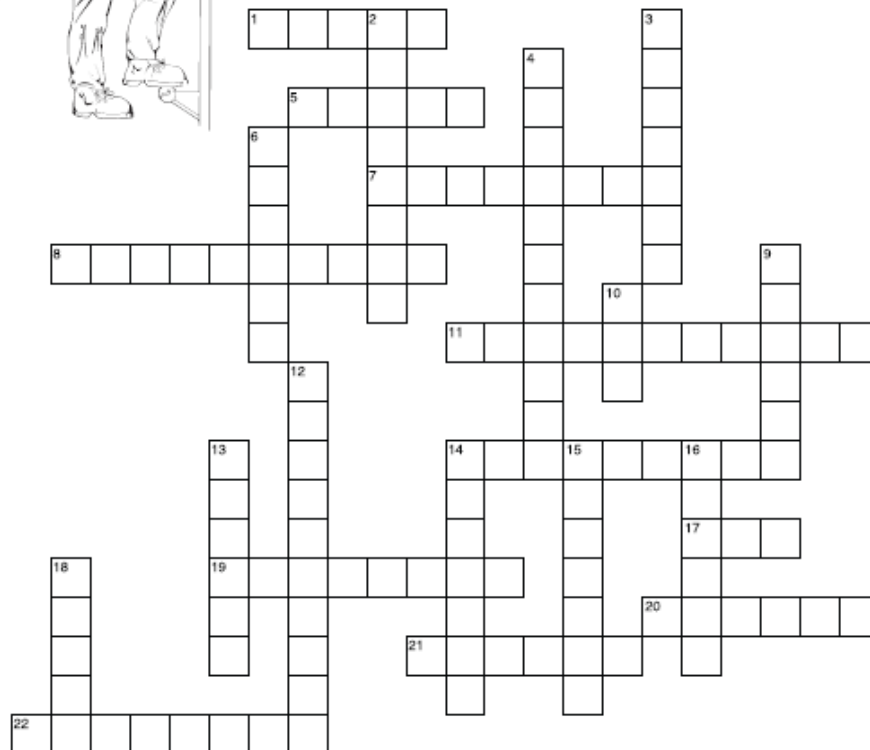
REPETITIVE MOTION INJURIES/ERGONOMICS

Employee Puzzle



Ergonomics 1

A basic understanding of ergonomics can help you work more comfortably and safely. Do you understand these ergonomics terms?



ACROSS

- 1 exertion or intense effort
- 5 piece of furniture
- 7 relating to the body
- 8 good exercise, bad work technique
- 11 area where tasks are carried out
- 14 fiber that links bones together
- 17 repetitive motion injury (abbr)
- 19 movement
- 20 hamstring, e.g.
- 21 physical harm or damage
- 22 dancing is a form of ____

DOWN

- 2 painful contracting of muscle
- 3 dilemma
- 4 field of study concerned with modification
- 6 fibrous tissue
- 9 connections of movable parts of the body
- 10 ergonomic injury (abbr)
- 12 able to be altered
- 13 exertion
- 14 raising
- 15 unwieldy or clumsy
- 16 impulse transmitters
- 18 loosen

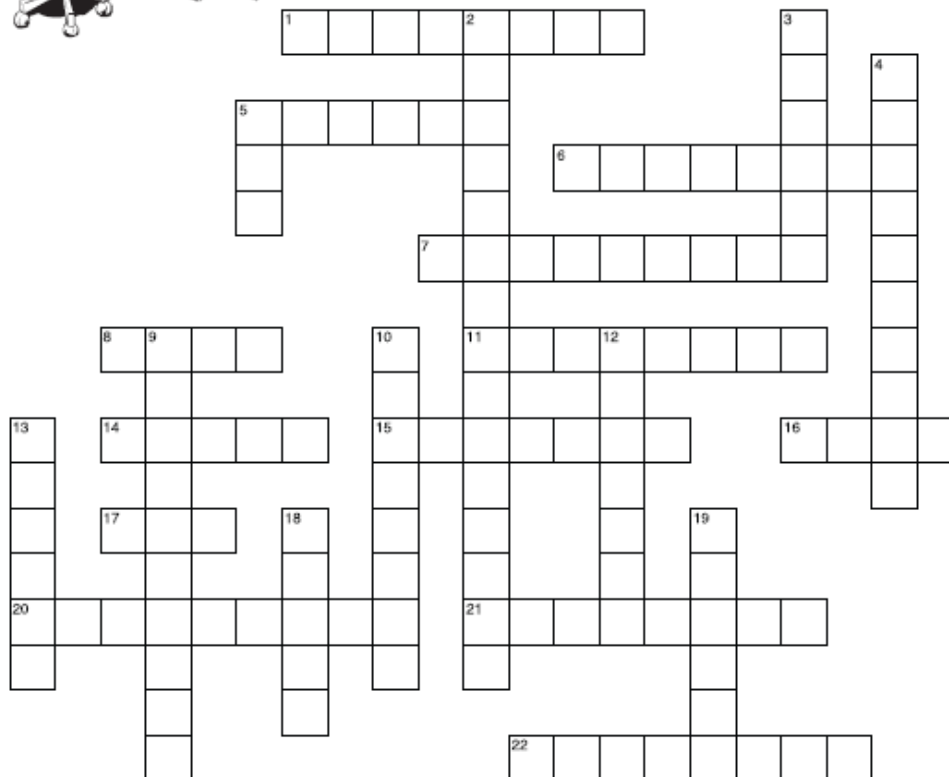
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Employee Puzzle

Ergonomics 2

Ergonomics is all about a good fit between you and your job. The correct answers to these clues are a good fit for these crossword spaces.


ACROSS

- 1 action
- 5 lift devices
- 6 inflammation
- 7 rotate
- 8 clutch
- 11 traits
- 14 hasten
- 15 exhaust
- 16 relax
- 17 type of RSI injury (abbr)
- 20 connective tissue
- 21 put together
- 22 strain

DOWN

- 2 system that moves the body and maintains its form
- 3 movable
- 4 one who studies safety relationship between worker and workplace
- 5 cumulative trauma disorder (abbr)
- 9 act of doing over and over again
- 10 end of upper arms joining collarbone and blade-bone

- 12 hunching is an example of poor _____
- 13 one type of work room
- 18 extend
- 19 behaviors acquired by learning or repetition