



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY

ERGONOMICS PROGRAM MANUAL

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DEFINITIONS AND KEY TERMS

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS	Workplace procedures that reduce the duration, frequency, and exposures to ergonomic workplace hazards. This includes exercises and short breaks to reduce worker task stress and rotation of job task or assignment.
BIFMA	Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer’s Association; a group that addresses common concerns in the furniture industry.
ENGINEERING CONTROLS	Risk control methods implemented to reduce repetitive motion injuries. These controls include but are not limited to; personal protective equipment, redesign of workstation, adjustable equipment, tools, and/or fixtures, work pacing, workplace stretches and exercises.
ERGONOMICS	An applied science concerned with designing and arranging objects people use in a safer and more efficient manner. ERGO: meaning work; NOMOS: meaning laws.
MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS (MSDs)	Disorders related to the musculature and skeleton caused by repetitive tasks, awkward movements, or other events.
REPETITIVE MOTION INJURY (RMI)	A condition caused by repeated movements and overuse of a body part, often leading to pain, inflammation, and damage to muscles, tendons, nerves, or ligaments.



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Environmental Health & Safety:

- Develop/maintain Ergonomics Program
- Conduct training & workstation assessments

Department Managers/Supervisors

- Identify ergonomic risk tasks
- Arrange assessments
- Ensure implementation of recommendations

Employees

- Report ergonomic concerns
- Follow recommended work practices
- Take applicable SumTotal ergonomics training course

Workers' Compensation/Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodations

- Identify possible RMI Workers' Compensation claims
- Coordinate with EHS to evaluate employee's workstation and job functions in the event of a reported RMI or an employee request for reasonable accommodations
- Support work restrictions/accommodations
- Work with health providers to provide related medical guidance



PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Reporting a Repetitive Motion Injury

All work-related injuries should be reported to a supervisor immediately. The supervisor is then responsible for contacting Workers' Compensation. The employee may be referred seek medical treatment at an approved provider, if necessary.

Request a worksite evaluation by completing the online "[Ergonomic Request Form](#)". Cal Poly Pomona Ergonomics will contact you within 2 weeks to schedule the assessment. If you have not heard from CPP Ergonomics, please contact ergo@cpp.edu.

Ergonomic Safety Training

Take the appropriate ergonomic safety training on SumTotal:

- [CSU - Computer Workstation Ergonomics](#)
- [CSU - Manual Material Handling Ergonomics for Custodians](#)
- [CSU - Manual Material Handling Ergonomics for Landscape Services Employees](#)
- [CSU - Manual Material Handling Ergonomics for Trades Employees](#)

Worksite Evaluation

A worksite evaluation is conducted to evaluate the employee's workstation. A worksite evaluation may be requested directly by the employee, or other University employee on behalf of another employee.

To request a worksite evaluation by completing the online "[Ergonomic Request Form](#)". After the initial request is made, an automatic "[Pre-Assessment Evaluation](#)" will be sent to the employee to be completed. The "Pre-Assessment Evaluation" should be completed by the employee. On this self-assessment, the employee will be asked to identify their discomfort locations and discomfort severity. Cal Poly Pomona Ergonomics will contact you within 2 weeks to schedule the assessment. If you have not heard from CPP Ergonomics, please contact ergo@cpp.edu.

During a workstation evaluation, the entire workstation may be assessed and adjusted to the employee. After the assessment, a report will be sent to the employee and their HEERA manager or supervisor with a summary of the onsite assessment and any recommendations.

Administrative and Engineering Controls

Administrative controls include:

- Education and training for ergonomic safety standards and repetitive motion injuries
- Proper notification procedures and preventative exposure methods
- Workstation or work area design evaluation
- Job and task rotation
- Incorporation of regular breaks and exercises

Engineering controls include:

- Adjustable chairs with increased back support
- Keyboard trays
- Foot rests
- VDT anti-glare screens
- Document holders
- Ergonomically designed keyboards, mice, and mouse pads
- External cameras
- Other ergonomic equipment as determined by a workstation evaluation

Workstation Design Criteria

A thoughtfully designed workstation can prevent many repetitive motion disorders and musculoskeletal disorders. There are two main types of workstation environments:

- Stationary Workstation
- Non-stationary Workstation

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Ergonomic Program Manual will be reviewed every two years by the Environmental Health and Safety department.

INFORMATION

Musculoskeletal Disorders

MSDs occur due to repeated trauma, repetitive stress on particular areas of the body, and occupational overexertion. They can affect the hands, fingers, back, neck, wrists, legs, shoulders as well as soft tissue. Developing gradually over time, the warning signs of MSD's include pain, stiffness, tingling, numbness, difficulty moving, muscle loss, paralysis, or lack of strength.

The ability of an employee to fulfill responsibilities at work is compromised when they have an MSD. The best way to prevent these injuries and illnesses is to learn how to recognize signs of MSD's before they become debilitating and to know the simple steps you can take to prevent them. Using ergonomics to modify your workplace can enhance your ability to prevent MSD's and stress related illnesses.

Types of Musculoskeletal Disorders	Prevention:
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS): With CTS, the median nerve in the wrist becomes pinched due to performing repetitive and forceful tasks over time without giving the body enough time to relax and recover. This causes tingling, numbness, pain, as well as loss of strength and sensation in the thumbs and fingers.	Give yourself breaks when performing repetitive tasks. You may also be able to use job rotation to put more variation into your tasks and use stretches from the following section. Practice stretches for the wrists, arm, and shoulder.

Sciatica: When you sit a lot or if you injure your back, you may experience pain due to pressure on the sciatic nerve. This may feel like a burning or tingling sensation down the leg, weakness, numbness, or difficulty moving the leg or foot, constant pain in one side of the buttocks, or a shooting pain that makes it difficult to stand up.	Stretching out your lower back, hips, and legs, maintaining proper posture, and making sure to give yourself breaks from sitting can help to prevent sciatic pain.
Low back pain: This can result from many things including improper lifting or sitting posture, excessive vibration, or other back strain. Smoking can also lead to low back pain as it increases the risk of vascular disease. When damage of the vascular structures of the disks and joints occurs, pain can result.	Be very conscientious about your posture and in choosing what you lift manually. Studies have shown that smoking may cause low back pain due to decreased circulation in that area. Follow the guidelines in the next section
De Quervain's disease: due to gripping and twisting motions in the hands, this MSD causes pain in the base of the thumbs.	When you grip things, even a pencil or a pen, use a looser grip and be careful not to over-strain your hand when you are twisting things. Use fist exercises and hand stretches to loosen this area up.
Trigger finger: the repeated use of the index finger can cause it to move with snapping movements and range of motion is compromised.	Avoid excessive amounts of repeated vibration. You can massage your hands to stimulate circulation.
Rotator cuff injury: When you repeatedly use your arms above their head, they are at risk of damaging your shoulders, causing pain and stiffness.	Use a stepladder or other safe platform to raise yourself so you do not have to work with your arms above your head.
Raynaud's Syndrome: also called "white finger," this MSD is caused by repeated exposure to vibration and causes tingling, numbness, and loss of feeling, control, and color of finger(s).	Spread the finger work out to other fingers on the hand in addition to the index finger. Also, keep the fingers limber.

Setting Up Your Workstation

The concept of ergonomics is to fit the workplace to the employee. Limiting repetitive movements, using basic, adjustable tools and supports, and ergonomic education all do this. It is also necessary to use proper lifting techniques, postures, movements that can be incorporated into work breaks, and available support tools for the workstation. Once this is done, there is a better fit to your equipment and ability for you to shift positions, therefore making your work environment more comfortable.

Setting up a Stationary Workstation That Fits You:

Proper setup of your workstation is key to having a lower stress work environment. Here are some general guidelines:

Chair: Using a chair that is adjustable allows you to use various postures. A backrest with proper lumbar support is ideal for maintaining correct posture and arm rests help to reduce shoulder strain. If your chair does not have adequate support, you can roll up a towel or use a pad and place it behind the curve in your back.

Keyboard and mouse: Split keyboards are popular, but they are not suitable for everyone. When choosing a keyboard, pay attention to your wrist posture and the size of your hand in relation to the keyboard, following the guidelines below to ensure the right fit. The mouse should be close to the keyboard, so the operator does not need to reach repeatedly. If there is not a close place for the mouse, consider a rotating mouse platform. A wrist rest may provide support and encourage proper wrist position to prevent injury. Place one along the front edge of your keyboard for wrist/hand support. DO NOT bend your wrist in awkward positions, overtime this will injure you.



Monitor and document: The display screen should be placed so it is directly in front of you and so that the top of the screen is at eye level. The preferred viewing distance is 18-inches. If you have a large monitor, you should adjust the size of the document you are reading/writing, so you do not have to move your head constantly.

Environment: The lighting should be adequate but should not cause glare on the computer screen and should not be directed into your field of view. Adjustable lighting allows the operator to alter the contrast as needed, and a matte finish on the wall reflects light adequately preventing glare. Cleaning the monitor frequently to remove dust particles can help to reduce glare and glare filters can be placed on the screen to help as well.

Work Process: The way in which an employee uses their workstation is as important as making the workstation fit the employee. Repetitive motions and prolonged activity without a break increase your chances of becoming injured or fatigued. Microbreaks should be taken every half-hour to allow the body a chance to stretch and shift position.

Proper Reach Area: Things that you use often should be kept close by to prevent strain due to reaching. However, things that will only be used a few times during the day should be kept some distance away, so you have to stand up and walk to get them. This promotes movement during otherwise sedentary work.



Setting up a Non-Stationary Workstation that Fits You

This type of workstation varies in location and possibly day to day. Factors that affect these types of work environments would include but not limited to Confined Spaces, Slanted or Roof Surfaces, Outdoors not in a Controlled Environment, Power or Communication Lines, Adverse Weather, Tunnel or Mining Area, Scaffold 7' Above the Ground, High Hazard Condition Area, Custodial Services, Plant Maintenance and Repair Services, Landscaping and Grands Services.

Work conducted under these types of conditions require special procedures, training, and personal protective equipment. California Code of Regulations Title 8 provides information regarding the specific reequipments for work conducted in these areas.

Body Mechanics

The body position you use to perform your daily tasks is as important in maintaining your health as having an ergonomically designed workstation. It is preferable to lift loads that are off the floor, about waist high, and easy to reach. Keep this in mind as you are placing loads that will later be lifted manually.

Correct Lifting Technique:

- Check to see if the load is heavy or light.
- Make sure the path of transportation is clear of obstacles.
- Keep your back straight and bend your knees to pick up the load.
- Use a smooth motion when you lift, do not jerk.
- Keep load as close to your body as possible when you lift.
- As you stand, let your legs do the work.

Pushing or Pulling a Load: It is easier to push a load than to pull a load. If you must pull a load, it is best to keep the cart at your side. This motion is hard on your lumbar spine, so it is important to use a diagonal foot position and get as close to the load as possible by bending your legs, not your waist. As you stand, use your legs do the work. Then, keep the load close to your body as you stand up.

ADDITIOINAL RESOURCES

- [Billy Bronco’s Guide to Basic Ergonomics](#)
- [Billy Bronco’s Guide to Ergonomic Stretches](#)
- [Billy Bronco’s Guide to Preventing Carpal Tunnel](#)
- [Billy Bronco’s Guide to Working Remotely](#)

DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY

Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Updated By	Approved By
7/2025	Created Program Document	L. Inarda	E. Guandique
2/2026	Reviewed and Updated Links	L. Inarda	E. Guandique

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