

Ergonomics

Description

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) currently account for one-third of all occupational injuries and illnesses reported to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by employers every year. These disorders constitute the largest job-related injury and illness problem in the United States today. Workers suffering from MSDs experience less strength for gripping and less range of motion. In extreme cases, a person may experience loss of muscle function and inability to do everyday tasks.

Here are some common symptoms you should watch out for:

- Painful joints
- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Shooting or stabbing pains in arms or legs
- Swelling, inflammation, burning sensation
- Pain in wrists, shoulders, forearms, knees
- Fingers or toes turning white
- Back or neck pain, stiffness

By adapting tasks, workstations, tools, and equipment to fit the worker, ergonomics seeks to reduce physical stress on a worker's body and eliminate many potentially serious, disabling work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

UF has a commitment to provide a safe environment for its employees, students and guests. One element of this commitment is providing information, evaluation and consultation to reduce the risks of developing ergonomic injury.

Our [Computer Ergonomics Pamphlet](#) provides suggestions on how to create a comfortable computer workstation to help reduce muscle fatigue and increase productivity.

*Please print double-sided and flip on short edge for a handy ergonomic reference.

[Submit an Ergonomic Evaluation Form](#)

[su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Ergonomic Risk Factors "] According to NIOSH, the three primary risk factors that cause MSDs are high force, awkward posture, and long duration or high frequency. Increasing the combination or number of these risk factors increases the chance of employees developing discomfort, pain, and/or an MSD.

- Posture – In neutral posture, the joints can absorb force more easily than in others. Awkward and extreme postures increase susceptibility to injury, as they may stress joint components and reduce or block blood flow.
- Force – Gripping, pinching, pushing, pulling, and lifting objects place additional force on the body's joints. Increasing these forces requires additional muscle exertion, and places greater loads on joints and connective tissues which can cause fatigue and may contribute to MSD when there is inadequate time for rest and recovery.
- Frequency – Higher frequency of awkward postures and/or forces increases the potential for damage to a joint.

[/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Ergonomic Evaluation Information "] If you feel you are experiencing discomfort due to the setup of your workstation, please try to adjust your workstation using the referenced [Office Ergonomics Guidelines](#).

If after attempting this self-help approach, you are still experiencing discomfort, please fill out and submit the [Ergonomic Evaluation form](#).

You will be contacted via e-mail or phone by an EH&S Coordinator to schedule an evaluation appointment.

Additional Resources

[Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders \(WMSD's\)](#)

[/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Healthy Work Habits "] Frequent, short rest breaks throughout the day may be effective in reducing the incidence of Musculoskeletal Disease (MSD) discomfort during repetitive and static work. Follow these simple guidelines:

- Use correct posture when working. Keep moving as much as possible throughout the day.
- Take short 1-2-minute stretch breaks every 20-30 minutes. After each hour of work, take a break or change tasks for at least 5 minutes.
- Avoid eye fatigue by resting and refocusing your eyes periodically. Look away from the monitor and focus on something in the distance. Follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look approximately 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Rest your eyes by covering them with your palms for 10-15 seconds.
- Always try to get away from your computer during lunch breaks.

[/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Helpful Phone Apps "]

- Many apps are available for both Android and iPhone platforms.
- Click [here](#) to access a partial list.
- The apps are not endorsed by the University of Florida in any way and are provided as an additional resource guide for personal use only.

[/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Wellness "] GatorCare, the wellness partnership between University of Florida and UF Health, offers a variety of programs and resources. Visit [Windows to Wellness](#) to find campus resources available to UF and UF Health employees including [Occupational Wellness](#).

Walking maps are available for:

- [UF Campus](#)
- [UF Health](#)
- [UF Health – Off Campus](#)

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