

## TIPS to Prevent High Muscle Forces

Muscles produce force to move or hold a posture. High forces can result in injury.

High forces are required to lift, lower, carry, push, or pull heavy objects, especially in awkward postures. High forces are also required to hold a posture, especially for long periods.

### To reduce your risk of injury, PRACTICE THESE TIPS . . .

- Put one foot on a step or rail to reduce stress on your back and legs when standing for long periods. From time to time, alternate the foot you have on the rail.
- Wear shoes with enough cushioning to relieve the stress on your knees and back when standing for long periods.
- Use anti-fatigue matting when standing is required for long periods to reduce the stress on your back and legs.
- Vary your posture often.
- Ask for assistance if required to handle heavy luggage.

## TIPS to Prevent Repetitive Work

The same muscles are used over and over again in repetitive work.

Repeated forceful movements – especially in awkward postures – increase the risk of injury.

### To reduce your risk of injury, PRACTICE THESE TIPS . . .

- Vary your technique to use different muscles, such as alternating between left and right hands.
- Vary your activities and pace repetitive tasks. Take a few minutes to do something that uses different muscles – share responsibilities at the front desk and rotate duties.
- Take “micro pauses”.

#### Micro Pause

- Let muscles rest by pausing for 5 to 10 seconds.
- Return to an upright posture and let your arms hang loosely by your sides.

*This pamphlet contains general information about tasks that contribute to musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs) such as sprains and strains. A musculoskeletal injury (MSI) prevention program is the responsibility of the employer. For further information, see sections 4.47 – 4.58 of the Occupational Health & Safety Regulation and the WCB publications “Understanding the Risks of Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI): An educational guide for workers on sprains, strains, and other MSIs” and “Preventing Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI): A guide for employers and joint committees”.*

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#### Additional copies may be obtained through:

Workers’ Compensation Board of B.C.  
Publications and Videos Section  
6711 Elmbridge Way  
Richmond BC V7C 4N1

Phone (604) 276-3068  
Fax (604) 279-7406

#### WCB Prevention Information Line

The WCB Prevention Information Line can answer your questions about workplace health and safety, worker and employer responsibilities, and reporting a workplace incident. The Prevention Information Line accepts anonymous calls.

Phone 604 276-3100 in the Lower Mainland, or call 1 888 621-SAFE (7233) toll-free in B.C.

To report after-hours and weekend incidents and emergencies, call 604 273-7711 or toll-free 1 866 922-4357.



## ERGONOMIC TIPS

for the Hospitality Industry

Preventing Injuries to  
**Front Desk  
Agents**

## What is Ergonomics?

Many of the ways we work – such as lifting, reaching, or repeating the same movements – may strain our bodies and lead to injuries.

Ergonomics prevents these types of injuries by fitting the job to the person using proper equipment and work practices. This results in the safest way to work and prevents workplace injuries.

The high number of sprains and strains (musculoskeletal injuries – MSIs) in the hospitality industry concerns employers, workers, and the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB).

Employers must provide equipment and establish safe work practices to reduce the risks of sprains and strains (MSI). Employers must also instruct workers in these safe work practices. Workers must follow employers' instructions to protect themselves.

*Working together, employers and workers can prevent many sprain and strain type injuries (MSIs).*

### Risk Factors

Many jobs have risks that can lead to sprain and strain injuries (MSIs). If we are aware of the risk factors, we may be able to change how we do our jobs and prevent injuries.

This pamphlet explains some of the risks of working at the front desk, and provides tips on work practices to prevent injuries.

*Prevention is the best policy.*

## TIPS to Prevent Awkward Postures

Our bodies function best in comfortable (neutral) postures. Awkward body postures increase the stress on ligaments and joints. This can lead to fatigue and discomfort, and increase the risk of injury.

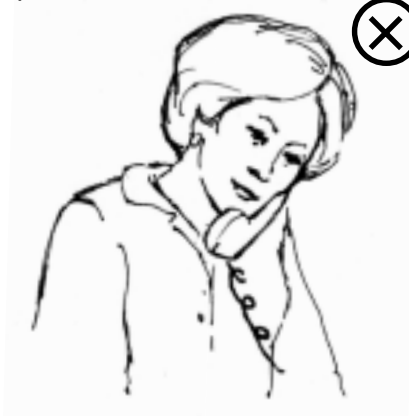
At the front desk, awkward postures can happen when:

- You have a long reach to the telephone or keyboard
- The computer monitor is too low or too high
- You adjust your body to compensate for or overcome glare on the computer monitor
- You must hold a telephone receiver while keying or writing

*Example of awkward posture and unsteady balance*



*Example of awkward neck and shoulder posture*



You may not feel pain or discomfort when in risky postures, but the potential for injury is still present.

*Be aware of your posture when you work.*

Your posture depends on:

- The height of the work surface
- Where materials are stored
- Space available in your work area
- How you organize your work area
- How you position your body
- How you hold objects

For more information on computer workstations see the WCB publication "How to Make Your Computer Workstation Fit You".

## To reduce your risk of injury, PRACTICE THESE TIPS . . .

Adjust your workstation so that you can answer YES to the following:

- I can easily reach the items that I use frequently.
- I do not cradle the telephone between my shoulder and ear.
- The monitor is an arm's length away from me.
- The top of the monitor is at eye level.
- The keyboard is at elbow height.
- When I use the keyboard, my wrists are straight.
- When I use the keyboard, my elbows are by my sides.
- The mouse is on the same level as the keyboard and within easy reach.
- I have the choice of sitting or standing at the workstation.
- I know how to adjust my chair so that I can use good posture.

*Example of a counter workstation*

