

SAFETY FOCUSED

Presented by

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Electrical Safety in the Workplace

Electrical Safety Month takes place every May, making it a good time to review common workplace hazards. For example, while wall outlets are common in every workplace, even the small amount of electricity they contain has enough power to cause equipment damage and severe electrocutions. You also need to consider how overhead power lines, handheld equipment and wet conditions can expose you to electrical hazards.

Any contact with exposed circuitry or energized appliances can interfere with the normal electrical signals in your body and lead to shocks and burns. And, if a shock occurs while you're on an elevated surface, muscle contractions or a startled reaction can lead to a dangerous fall.

Keep these simple tips in mind to stay safe around electricity in the workplace:

- Only use equipment that's been tested by a [nationally recognized testing laboratory program](#).
- Check electrical cords for damage before you plug them in. Even slightly damaged cords can cause electrocutions and fires.
- Check the wattage of appliances before plugging them into outlets to avoid overloads.
- Disconnect appliances from outlets by pulling on the plastic plug and not the cord.
- Don't use outlets that feel warm, as it could be a sign of faulty wiring. Instead, have the outlet checked by a certified electrician.
- Never use extension cords as permanent wiring.
- Place appliances that generate light or heat away from any flammable materials.

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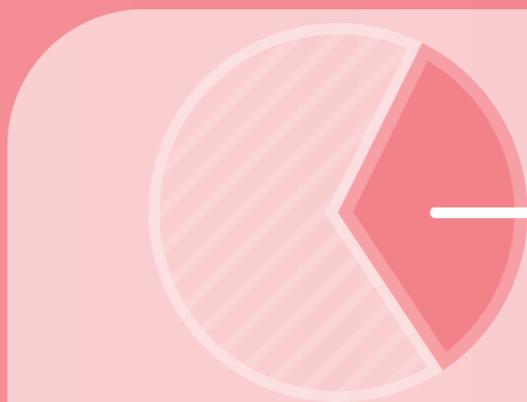
Ergonomic Basics to Prevent Injuries

Everyone has to deal with aches and pains from repetitive motions, uncomfortable postures and bad lifting techniques. But, by practicing good ergonomics, you'll be able to reduce the chances of getting injured and stay efficient both in the workplace and at home.

While simple sprains and strains are sometimes unavoidable, long-term stress on the body can lead to serious musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) that cause severe pain and lower your range of movement. In fact, half of all adults live with an MSD according to the Bone and Joint Initiative, the same number as those with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases combined.

There are three common topics to consider when it comes to ergonomics:

- **Workstation setup**—Adjust any workstations or desks that you use frequently so that your shoulders, back, wrists and hands are relaxed. You may be able to change the angles of chairs, monitors, keyboards and other equipment to better suit your body.
- **Warming up and taking breaks**—Even if your work isn't physically demanding, you should still take some time to stretch and adjust your body before you work. It's also important to avoid repetitive motions by taking short breaks to let your body rest in a new position.
- **Lifting techniques**—Never use your back to lift heavy objects. Instead, keep your back straight and lift with your legs. Your leg muscles are larger and more efficient for lifting, and even small objects can strain your lower back. If you struggle to pick up a heavy object, place it back where it was or ask someone else for help. Also, try to avoid lifting and twisting in the same motion to lower the amount of stress on your body.



According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, ergonomics are a factor in **one-third of all injuries** that result in days away from work.

