

Ergonomics is a multidisciplinary science that combines elements of comfort and safety in order to reduce stress and eliminate injuries caused by the workplace environment. The goal of ergonomics involves “fitting” the job to the employee to increase productivity, efficiency, and quality of work.

How does ergonomics affect me?

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are one of the leading causes of lost or restricted work time. MSDs are injuries affecting muscles, nerves, and tendons and can emerge from risk factors or work conditions such as:

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| • Poor body mechanics | • Repetitive tasks |
| • Restrictive workstations | • Lifting heavy or awkward objects |
| • Forceful exertions | |

Examples of possible injuries from these work conditions include the following:

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| • Carpal tunnel syndrome | • Tendinitis |
| • Lower back injuries | • Muscle strains |

How can I prevent work-related MSDs?

Evaluate and self-adjust your workstation first by following Steps 1 and 2. If unsuccessful or unsatisfactory, go to Step 3 to request an ergonomic evaluation of your work area.

Ergonomic Evaluations

1

Self evaluation

Complete an online self-evaluation at <https://srm.usc.edu/rmcsapps/ergoselfevalsys/>.

2

Implement self-adjustments

Receive results via email and make recommended self-adjustments.

3

In-person evaluation (if necessary)

Request an in-person evaluation from USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice (OTFP) if self-adjustments are insufficient.

To schedule an appointment or inquire about OTFP services, go to <http://chan.usc.edu/patient-care/faculty-practice/contact-us>.

What I Can Do...

- Become knowledgeable of the common signs of stress. This may include irregular stiffness/pain, decreased range of motion, swelling.
- Report any MSD symptoms or risk factors to your supervisor.
- Visit the EH&S Ergonomics web page at <http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/environmental-health-safety/ergonomics>



References

NIOSH Workplace Safety & Health Topics: Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ergonomics/>

OSHA Safety and Health Topics: Ergonomics

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/>