



Safety and ergonomics

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines ergonomics as the science of fitting workplace conditions and job demands to the working population. This means putting in place tools or rules meant to reduce body stress and eliminate injuries associated with bad posture, repeated movements and overuse of muscles.

Good ergonomics can help reduce the chances that your employees will develop issues like back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome and other injuries to muscles, nerves, joints and spinal discs. The Institute of Medicine estimated in 2013 between \$45 billion and \$54 billion are lost annually due to these issues, both in lost time and wages.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration provides four reasons that there's a need for injury prevention programs in the workplace:

1. Automation
2. Diversity
3. Aging workforce
4. Traditional employment is changing



One of the most important things you can do to help reduce your risk of injury is to sit properly while working.

When sitting at a desk in an office chair, keep your:

- Ears in line with your shoulders
- Head level in line with your torso
- Shoulders back and relaxed, not rounded or elevated
- Forearms, wrists and hands relaxed and straight
- Elbows close to your body and bent 90 to 120 degrees
- Back straight and supported
- Thighs and hips supported by a well-padded seat, parallel to the floor
- Feet forward, supported by a foot rest

Here are some ideas you can implement at your workplace:

- Encourage stretching and movement throughout the day.
- Assess and identify where you can make improvements. Start small with chairs, keyboards or headsets.
- Include ergonomics as part of onboarding and ongoing training.
- Ask a local chiropractor to do an in-person or virtual session.
- Provide options for sit-to-standing at work.

Sources: [osha.gov](https://www.osha.gov)*, [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)*, [mayoclinic.com](https://www.mayoclinic.com)*

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