

BODY MECHANICS

WCU

INTRODUCTION

Some of the most common injuries sustained by members of the health care team are severe musculoskeletal strains. Many injuries can be avoided by the conscious use of proper body mechanics when performing physical labor.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS THAT CAUSE BACK AND BODY INJURIES

Most injuries are the result

- Months or years of poor body mechanics
- Life stresses
- Poor posture
- A loss of flexibility
- A general lack of physical fitness



I hurt my back last week, so I've been put on "Light Duty" for a couple of weeks...

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT INJURIES?

Most injuries can be avoided by using good prevention methods.

- Use good body mechanics
- Stay physically fit and active
- Use mechanical assist devices when possible (lifts, carts, dolly)
- Get help when necessary.

DEFINITION

- Body mechanics is the utilization of correct muscles to complete a task safely and efficiently, without undue strain on any muscle or joint

SITTING AND COMPUTER STATION WORK

- Sit close to your work
- Hips, knees and ankles are open to 90 degrees
- Elbows are open to 90-120 degrees
- Wrists are in relaxed and neutral position (not bent)
- Both feet are flat on the floor or use a foot rest
- Shoulders are low and relaxed
- Head and neck are aligned with spine



SITTING AND COMPUTER WORK STATION

- Do not slump or lean forward or downward to reach for work.
- Do not sit for more than 60 minutes without getting up or changing position.
- Raise the height of the computer screen so screen is at or slightly below eye level.

STANDING

- Bring your work close to you.
- Put one foot up, shift your weight and position frequently.
- Keep your work at a comfortable height.
- Wear comfortable shoes and stand on an anti-fatigue mat, if possible.

STANDING

DO NOT:

- Stand in one place too long.
- Stand bent forward at your waist or neck.
- Lock your knees into a straight or over-extended position.

PUSHING

- Push whenever possible.
- Keep head up, knees bent, and back straight.
- Keep the load in front and use both hands.
- Remain close to the item being pushed.

PULLING OR TWISTING

DO NOT:

- Pull when you can push
- Twist your body
- Lean forward

CARRYING OBJECTS

When carrying objects:

- Test load first.
- Use a cart/transfer device whenever possible
- Pivot with your feet - don't twist at waist
- Take multiple trips
- Use both hands
- Keep objects near your body and directly in front of you
- Ask for assistance with heavy items.

CARRYING OBJECTS

DO NOT:

- Carry with one hand
- Twist body
- Carry with a bent-over, stooped posture.

If items are too heavy, ask for assistance



REACHING

When reaching for an object, remember to:

- Keep back straight
- Reach with two hands
- Face the object
- Stand on a stable step-stool to reach high items
- Bend knees slightly.

REACHING

When reaching for an object, **DO NOT:**

- Overreach by standing on toes
- Reach with one hand
- Twist at waist
- Stand on an unsafe surface
- Reach with legs locked in straight position.

LIFTING

When lifting objects, always:

- Use a mechanical lift device when feasible
- Keep objects close to your body and directly in front
- Keep feet at least shoulder width apart
- Test the load before lifting
- Squat, bending your knees and hips
- Keep your head up and back straight
- Tighten stomach and lift with leg muscles
- Request help with heavy items.

LIFTING

When lifting objects,

DO NOT:

- Lift in a bent-over, stooped position
- Twist at waist
- Lift with one hand
- Lift with outstretched arms
- Keep feet together
- Lift above shoulders or below knees when feasible



PREPARE PATIENT

- ◉ Update yourself on the patient's physical limitations or condition.
- ◉ Let the patient know what you are going to do so they may assist.
- ◉ Position the patient for transfer.

PREPARE YOURSELF/TEAM

- ◉ Keep feet apart, knees bent with back and head straight
- ◉ Be close to patient
- ◉ Use transfer device to assist in moving patient: transfer belt, slide or roller board, draw sheet
- ◉ Pivot feet, don't twist waist
- ◉ Have adequate number of persons to transfer patient (based on patient's size and/or type of transfer required - i.e. transfer of large patients and/or from bed to stretcher require minimally two persons).

PREPARE EQUIPMENT

- ◉ Use mechanical lifts when possible.
- ◉ Lock wheels of bed, wheelchair or stretcher.
- ◉ Adjust position and height of bed, wheelchair or stretcher.
- ◉ Do not attempt to move patients by yourself. This may cause injury to yourself or the patient.

SUMMARY

- ◉ Know what can cause pain in the workplace.
- ◉ Use appropriate techniques to prevent injuries.
- ◉ Follow the tips for good body mechanics when sitting or standing. Use the tips when carrying, reaching for, or lifting objects.
- ◉ Be prepared for work by staying physically fit and active.
- ◉ For additional information about body mechanics and ergonomics, see the Safety Officer.