

# Ergonomics and the Mature Worker



## What's at Stake?

Older workers are dying on the job at a higher rate than workers overall, even though the overall rate of workplace fatalities has been decreasing.

## What's the Danger?

While many people are quite capable of working well into their 60s or longer, they are at greater risk for injury and job-related illnesses because of reduced strength, balance, hearing, vision, and slower reaction time.

## How to Protect Yourself

Following these seven ergonomic based tips can help mature workers stay safe and be more comfortable on the job.

### 1. Arrange your workstation to minimize the distance you need to reach for equipment or materials.

- The items you need to use most frequently should be centrally located.
- Ensure your chair is at the correct height and properly adjusted to your workstation's height.

### 2. Shed some light on the situation.

- Low lighting can lead to trips, slips and falls.
- A middle-aged worker needs up to six times as much light to see, compared to someone in his or her 20's.
- Bump up the type size at your computer to make reading documents easier. And ensure there is adequate lighting.

### 3. Reduce lifting demands on your body.

- Use lifting devices such as carts whenever possible.
- Lift with your legs instead of your back.
- If you are repeatedly reaching into boxes, try to place them on benches or tables to reduce the need for bending.

### 4. Listen up.

- If you have difficulty hearing what others are saying, have your hearing checked.
- It's a good idea to let your supervisor know if you have hearing loss or wear a hearing aid. This helps keep everyone safe and can also affect the type of hearing protection you wear.

#### **5. Make a move.**

- If your job involves long periods of sitting, get up and stand and stretch or take a short walk at least hourly.
- You'll be less stiff and you'll improve your body's blood flow.

#### **6. Watch out!**

- Take extra care when walking on slippery surfaces, particularly elevated slippery surfaces.

#### **7. Work it out.**

- Try to get regular exercise to keep your body limber and heart strong.
- If you haven't been exercising much and want to start, check with your doctor first to ensure you don't overdo it

## **Final Word**

Mature workers bring invaluable knowledge and experience to their jobs. Following a few ergonomic work practices can keep these workers safe and productive so they can continue to share that knowledge and experience