

PRETZEL POSTURES POSE PROBLEMS

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Your health can determine how and if you can enjoy life to the fullest at work, play and in recreational pursuits. One thing is certain - one needs to work in order to live. Working conditions need to be examined in order to determine if they are compatible to a life style based on a balance of mental, physical and emotional contributions of workers.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Firstly, an inquiry must be conducted at your place of employment to see the extent of the expenditure of physical and mental energy.

The following inquiry is needed:

- Do you often need to make strange or awkward movements to get your work done? Long reaches, twists, bends and stretches put your shoulders, back and elbows in uncomfortable and unnatural positions. These postures can injure your nerves and even blood vessels that supply your muscles.
- Sitting at your workstation for several hours daily or hunching over a could also injure your nerves or circulatory system. A 'static' posture is a position with little movement.
- Holding the same position for hours can lead to blocked blood vessels and poor oxygen supply-which can eventually damage muscle tissues. Sitting for a long period daily can lead to varicose veins in the legs swelling of lower extremities or numbness and tingling in feet. Compressing the nerves in your spinal column and legs for longs periods can bring back injury and chronic pain.
- These injuries are musculoskeletal disorders, or MSDs. Awkward movement and static postures

can add strain on your body. When you add lifting of heavy objects or performing repetitive motions, an injury becomes more likely.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Here are seven strategies for preventing musculoskeletal injuries:

1. Practice good posture, with shoulders straight and arms and elbows close to the body.
2. Move around routinely, taking frequent breaks if possible. Stretch, do a little exercise and relax your muscles.
3. Use caution when lifting or moving objects. Perhaps most importantly, get help from others or use mechanical aids when objects are heavy.
4. Reduce your own stress, since increased stress can increase blood pre-circulatory damage.
5. Know your body and listen to it. If you feel pain, take action to eliminate the source. Make sure that you treat the source so it doesn't lead to injury.
6. Use adjustable working surfaces if possible, for an ergonomically correct position.
7. if you work with vibrating equipment, use Personal Protective Equipment or other strategies to protect hands and arms from excessive vibration.
8. Avoid long-term pain and injury. Eat well, exercise and take steps to avoid awkward postures and reduce the effects of static positions.

FINAL WORD

Awkward and static postures, at work or elsewhere, can hurt you.

QUIZ

1. Which of the following could put a worker in uncomfortable and unnatural positions?
 - a. Long reaches and twists
 - b. Bends and stretches
 - c. Any of the above
2. In the body's normal alignment, shoulders are straight and arms hang down with elbows close to body.
 - o True
 - o False
3. A "static" posture is a position with much movement.
 - o True
 - o False
4. Holding the same position for hours can lead to blocked blood vessels and poor oxygen supply.
 - o True
 - o False

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

You work in a white-collar office environment. There are 15-minute coffee breaks in the morning and afternoon. You have suggested to the office supervisor to have 2-5-minute stretching and exercise programs in the coffee breaks. The office supervisor says some employees want the total 15 minutes for a break without exercise program.

What would you do?

BEFORE THE TALK - TIPS

Be prepared to discuss:

- Safe work practices and policies passed around pertaining to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) originating in the work environment.
- Reporting procedures related to concerns and incidents of MSDs in the work environment at your location.

Other:

- Ask a worker to demonstrate proper posture, and then compare it to his or her demonstration of extremely poor posture.
- Ask a few of your workers to demonstrate awkward positions that might be used in your line of work, such as reaching behind, bending from a chair, long reaches or twists.
- Ask your workers how long at time they might be holding a static position such as hunching over a machine.

AFTER THE TALK- CHECKLIST

PROVIDED FOLLOW-UP TO WORKERS THAT DID

POORLY ON THE QUIZ

NAME: _____

DATE:

TASK(S):

DATE: _____

REFRESHER TRAINING

TOPIC(S): _____

DATE:

OTHER (DESCRIBE):

MEETING DATE: _____

LOCATION: _____

NOTES

ANSWERS:

1. c	3. False
2. True	4. True

ATTENDANCE

INSTRUCTOR: _____ **DATE:** _____

SAFETY TALK: _____