SQ Acute: Ergonomics and Safe Lifting, Clinical

HealthStream™

Welcome to **SQ: Ergonomics and Safe Lifting, Clinical**.
Select START MODULE to begin.
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- Introduction
- What Is Ergonomics?
- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- MSDs in Clinical Workers
- Lifting Objects
- Lifting People
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Introduction

People working in healthcare have a higher risk for injuries. They may develop back pain or suffer injuries more often than most people.

A lot of the time, these injuries are the result of manual lifting, moving, and repositioning individuals.

Healthcare workers can avoid injury if they learn to lift people and objects correctly.

This module will review the following:

- The risks of manually handling individuals and how to reduce the risks
- The importance of an assessment before a lift or transfer
- Specific devices and safe ways to lift or transfer people

Please look at these important terms.

Select "+" to expand.

Glossary —

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)

Injuries or disorders of the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, cartilage, or spinal discs

Let's get started!

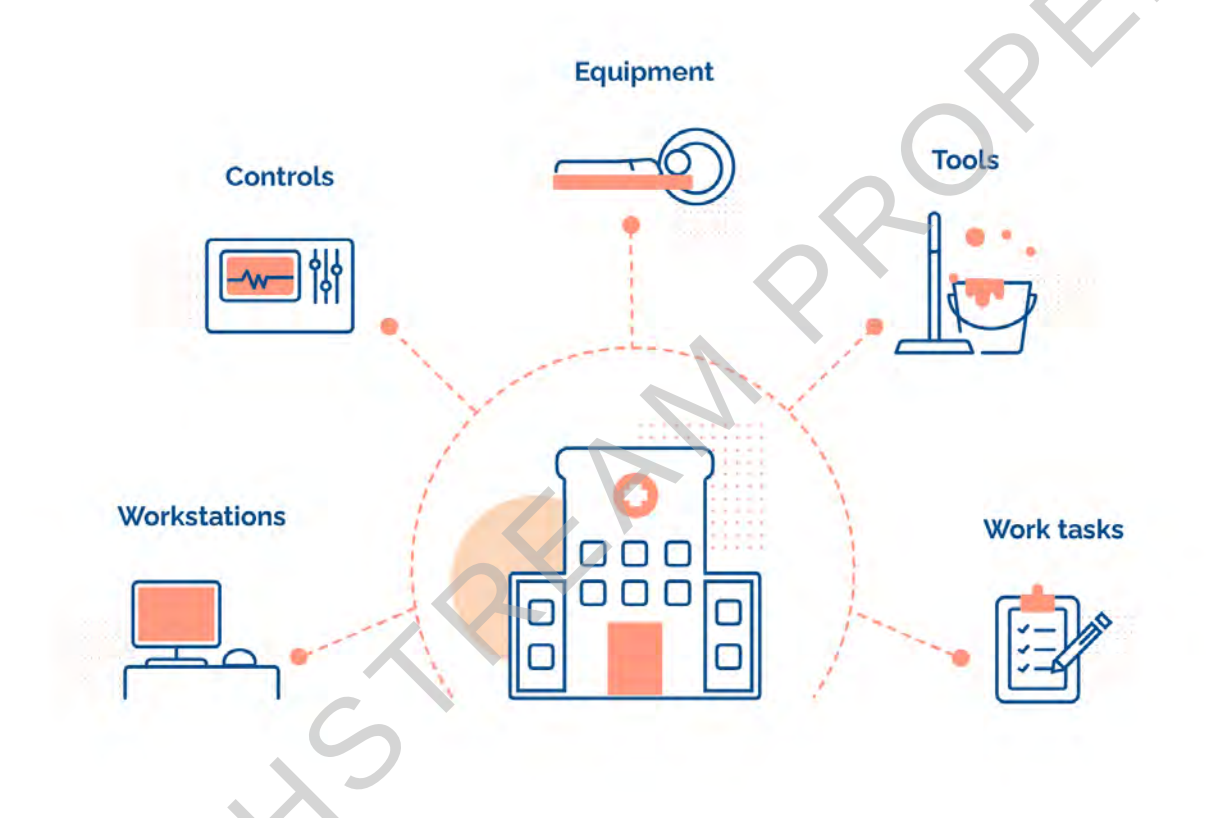
Complete the content above before moving on.

What Is Ergonomics?

Ergonomics is the science of helping people work with things in a safe and effective manner.

Ergonomics is used to design equipment and determine how to perform certain tasks to help prevent injuries.

Ergonomics should be used in the workplace. The principles should be used to plan the following:



Why is ergonomics important?

Sometimes, work may require using the body in ways that seem unnatural. A healthcare worker may have to push, pull, sit, stand, and bend in ways that strain the body.

These movements may not sound unnatural. However, the need to repeat them can create stress on the body.

This is especially true when a healthcare worker has to do the following:

1. Hold an awkward position for a long time.
2. Repeat movements many times.

Choose the best option and select SUBMIT.

What does ergonomics help people to do?

- Design tools in a way to help avoid injury.
- Design a way to complete a task to help avoid injury.
- Both statements are true.
- Neither statement is true.

SUBMIT

Complete the content above before moving on.

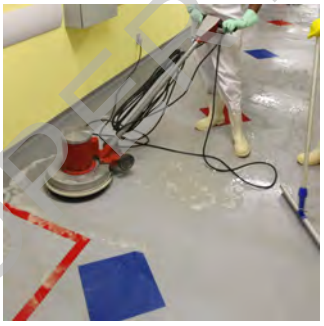
Musculoskeletal Disorders

Healthcare workers can experience injuries when their job involves the following:

Repetitive actions

Use of force

Awkward body positions



Tools or movement that cause vibration

These types of movements may cause musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). MSDs can impact the muscles, tendons, nerves, joints, and cartilage.

MSDs can be mild or severe. A person may feel pain and experience problems daily with an MSD. Some people only have problems and pain now and then.

Signs and Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of MSDs include the following:

- Numbness in the fingers or thighs
- Difficulty moving the fingers
- Stiffness in joints

- Pain in the back

Since MSDs can be serious, it is important to deal with symptoms right away.

Healthcare workers have to let their managers know if they experience any of these symptoms. Their employer is required by law to report injuries and illnesses that happen on the job.

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MSDs in Clinical Workers

Clinical workers often do a lot of lifting. This means they have a high level of risk for a back injury. One major reason for back injury is not using the right device when lifting or moving a person.

Other things that may increase the risk of back injury include the following:

- Using poor posture
- Being in poor physical shape
- Using poor body mechanics
- Lifting things that take a lot of force

How to prevent MSDs

Healthcare workers can prevent back injury when lifting and moving people by using the following:

- The correct device, like a portable lift
- Enough people to help transfer or lift a person safely

Here are other ways to reduce the risk of back injury when lifting:

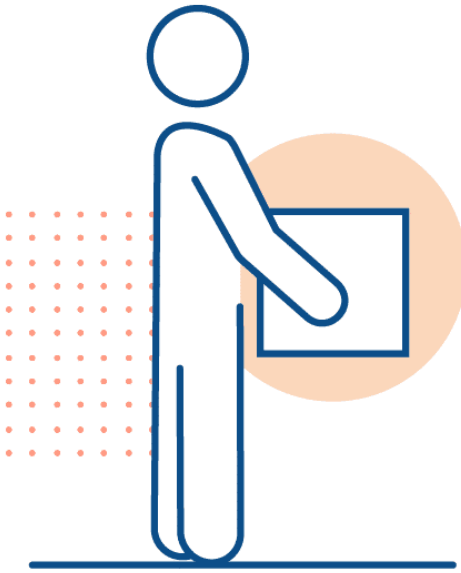
Select each card to view the text.

Use good posture.

Wear shoes with slip-resistant soles.

Stretch often and take breaks.

Lift with the knees.
Keep the back straight.



When lifting, keep the weight of the load close to the body.

Complete the content above before moving on.

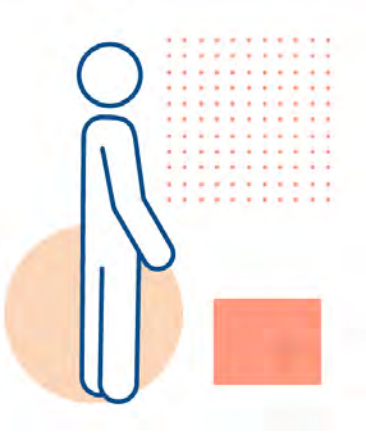
Lifting Objects

It is common for healthcare workers to be expected to lift and carry things. Unfortunately, lifting is one of the main things that can create back pain and injury.

When lifting an object without assistance, proper body mechanics should be used.

Here is the proper way to lift an item.

Follow these simple steps to reduce the risk of injury.



1. Stand with the feet shoulder-width apart. This will create a solid base of support. Stand close to the item that needs to be lifted.

2. Bend at the hips and knees. Use the muscles in the legs to lower down.

3. Lift with the head up and keep the natural curve in the lower back.

4. Keep the object being lifted close to the body.

5. Use the leg muscles to stand up and lift the item.

Always avoid twisting the body when lifting or carrying an object. Be sure to pivot from the hips if it is necessary to turn while carrying an item.

If possible, organize the work environment so most of the lifting is from waist level. Healthcare workers can reduce their risk of injury by not lifting items from the floor.

It is best to store heavy objects on shelves that are between waist and shoulder height.

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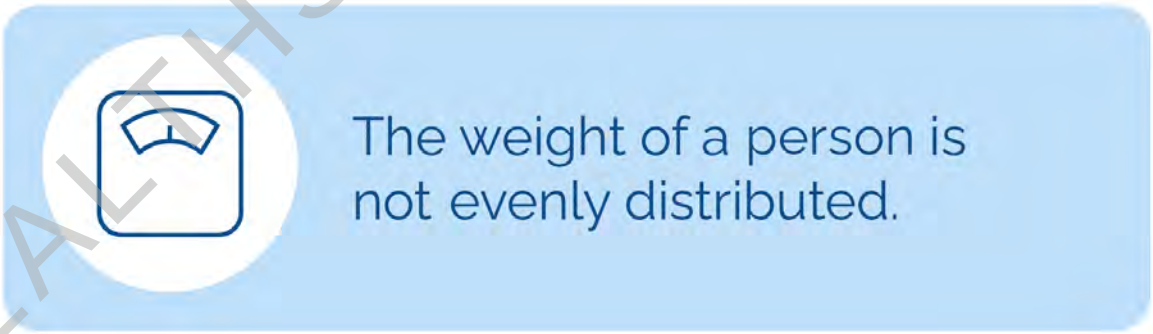
Lifting People

Moving a person is usually not a simple lift.

Unlike lifting a box, healthcare workers will rarely be able to use their leg muscles to help when moving a person. These tasks are more likely to use back muscles.

Healthcare workers need to be extra careful when moving people.

The basic principles for lifting objects often do NOT translate well to the manual handling of people.



They cannot always be held close to the body.

People are unpredictable.

During a lift or transfer, a person may:

- Start to resist.
- Have muscle spasms.
- Suddenly lose balance.

It is not safe to move an individual without a device or assistance. No amount of proper body mechanics can make this safe.

Moving a person with obesity is even more of a risk.

Mechanical equipment and assistive transfer devices are available to help with lifting.

Use these devices when a person:

- Cannot help with the move.
- Cannot put weight on one of their legs or both of their arms.
- Has difficulty keeping their balance when standing.
- Cannot move or straighten their hips, knees, elbows, or shoulders.
- Behaves in an uncooperative, aggressive, or unpredictable way.

Assistive devices should always be used to move, lift, or transfer a person (Level A). They help reduce the possibility of injury. They are also safer and often more comfortable for the person being lifted.

Here are a few examples of lifting equipment and assistive devices:

Portable total lifts

Sit-to-stand lifts

Bariatric lift for people with obesity

Overhead track lifts

Gait belts or transfer belts

Transfer boards

Devices for lateral

with handles

transfer, such as easy-to-slide inflatable mattresses and reduced-friction sheeting

To avoid the risk of injury to the employee or the individual being assisted, a transfer and mobility safety plan of care should be developed. It is also important to know the facility's policies and protocols for safe transfers and lifting.

The three primary risk factors for injury during physical tasks are **force**, **awkward posture**, and **repetition**. The following are some ways to limit the risks of each.

To limit the risk of **force**:

- Check the weight of an object before lifting it.
- If the object is too heavy to lift manually, use a lifting device.

To limit the risk of **awkward posture**:

- Use proper body mechanics.

To limit the risk of **repetition**:

- Perform non-lifting tasks between lifts.
- Take frequent breaks.

CONTINUE

Module Conclusion

When lifting something, always use proper body mechanics.

Find out what mechanical equipment and assistive transfer devices are available at the facility. Using these devices can help employees perform their job duties in a safe way. It will also reduce the stress placed on the body and limit the risk of injury.

This module has reviewed the following:

- The risks of manually handling individuals and how to reduce the risks
- The importance of an assessment before a lift or transfer
- Specific devices and ways to lift or transfer people

References

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This is the end of the module. To exit and return to the Activity Details, select **EXIT**.