



Awkward Postures

Awkward postures increase the total exertion required to complete a job task:

- The body must apply force to joints and muscles to deviate body parts from the neutral position.
- The further the deviation, the more force that must be applied.
- The further the deviation, the less force you are able to apply to your tool.
- Working in awkward postures causes fatigue and leads to injuries.

Examples

Some of the most common examples of awkward postures are:

- Working overhead
- Back bent forward
- Reaching or over-reaching
- Kneeling
- Wrist bent back or forward
- Bent neck
- Squatting or crouching

Awkward postures refers to positions of the body that deviate from your body's neutral position while performing tasks at work.

When in awkward positions, muscles operate less effectively, and more force is required to complete the task.

When we complete work in these postures, this is considered a common contributing factor in Musculoskeletal Injuries (MSIs).

Preventing MSIs

- Select tools that will allow workers to work in neutral postures where possible.
- Use height-adjustable workbenches and chairs.
- Avoid bending over by using lifting devices to hold work pieces at waist-height.
- Use step stools or ladders to avoid reaching overhead.
- Perform work at the proper heights:
 - Above the elbows for precision work
 - At the elbows for light work
 - Between the waist and elbows for heavy work

When awkward postures cannot be avoided:

- Respect your discomfort or pain. Frequently change positions, stretch to ease stiff muscles, take a short break, or change tasks.
 - Limit the duration in the posture
 - Take regular breaks
 - Perform a variety of jobs to change postures
 - Complete forceful actions closer to your neutral posture

Static or stationary postures, such as standing or sitting in the same position for an extended period of time is a common cause of back, neck, and leg pain.

A few minutes of walking, or stretching will increase your circulation, and help you feel better, and be more productive.

Discussion

What are some job tasks that you complete that require static postures?

Is there any equipment or procedures that could be used to limit your time in these postures?