

Ergonomic Tips for Staff

As an employee of a nursing home, you are subject to many stressors on your body throughout the day. This may include lifting heavy or awkward equipment, rolling food carts, pouring food out of heavy pots, reaching into containers, making repairs and doing housekeeping chores. Performing such repetitive and strenuous tasks can lead to chronic pain or injury. Try the following solutions to keep yourself injury-free on the job.

Moving Equipment

When moving equipment such as IV poles, oxygen canisters or X-ray machines, take the following precautions:

- Use a rolling device when available for transporting machinery.
- Push the equipment rather than pull it.
- Use equipment handles when available to make transport easier.
- Ask a co-worker for assistance, especially when carrying more than one item.

Reaching

Limit reaching into deep sinks, laundry bins or garbage bags by doing the following:

- Use a plastic basin to raise items up in a sink or wash items next to the sink.
- Use handling bags with side openings to dispose of laundry and garbage instead of large bins.
- Limit your usage of large containers to throw away garbage or laundry.
- Throw items in chutes and dumpsters below you.
- Use a spring-loaded platform to lift laundry to waist height.

Making Repairs

Reduce your risk of arm, shoulder or wrist injuries while making repairs by doing the following:

- Use non-slip padded handles for a good grip.
- Keep your wrist straight while doing tasks.
- Opt for a tool with a trigger bar versus a single finger trigger.

Housekeeping Chores

To reduce the risk of injury while conducting housekeeping chores, follow these tips:

- Switch back and forth between hands while doing tasks.
- Do not bend to clean objects; try to move them to waist level.
- If you must bend or stoop, bend your knees not your waist.
- Use extended handles on cleaning tools to avoid excessive strain on your back.
- Use carts to transport supplies rather than carrying them.
- Use vacuums and buckets on wheels.