

# ERGONOMICS

Fast Fact 022:01, October 2020

## WHAT IS ERGONOMICS?

Ergonomics is the relationship between the worker and the job and focuses on the design of work areas or work tasks to improve job performance. The goal of ergonomics is to provide maximum productivity with minimal physiological or health cost to the worker. A number of factors play a role in ergonomics; these include **body posture and movement (sitting, standing, lifting, pulling and pushing)**, and **environmental factors (noise, lighting, temperature and humidity)** (Dul et al 1993).

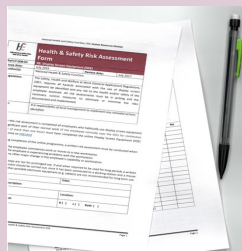
Although many employees relate ergonomics to Display Screen Equipment (DSE) /computer use, it is relevant to all workplaces and work tasks e.g. Manual Handling of objects and people, environmental factors, work stations for both DSE work and non DSE work.

## ERGONOMIC RISK MANAGEMENT (ERM)

ERM is the identification of work areas/tasks that may expose employees at risk of injury and/or ill health.

Some of these may include the following work tasks/ area;

1. DSE
2. Manual Handling
3. Patient handling
4. Office Accommodation



**Do you know that these risk assessments are  
ERGONOMIC ASSESSMENTS!**

**Ergonomic Risk Factors** to consider in your work are:

- Awkward postures
- Forceful exertions
- Insufficient rest breaks
- Lighting, including glare
- Temperature (Cold/ Hot)
- Bending & Lifting
- Repetitive motions
- Noise
- Improper adjustment of equipment

## MUSCULOSKETAL DISORDERS (MSDs)

**Poor ergonomics** can lead to Musculoskeletal disorders also known as Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULDs) and Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSIs).

These are soft tissue injuries that affect the muscles, tendons, nerves, ligaments, joints and/or blood vessels.

## HOW TO PREVENT WORK-RELATED MSDs?

### MANAGERS must:

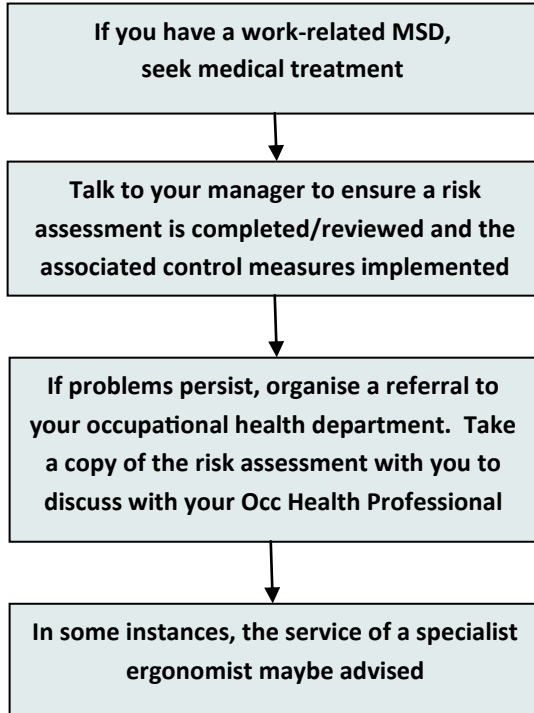
- Complete specific risk assessments of work activities to include all ergonomic risk factors
- Ensure appropriate control measures are implemented
- Develop a safe system of work
- Provide appropriate training

### EMPLOYEES must:

- Complete necessary training in **Manual Handling and DSE as appropriate**
- Implement what you have learnt in your training
- Use the appropriate equipment provided
- Follow safe systems of work.

# Ergonomics

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A WORK-RELATED MSD?



## THE ROLE OF THE SPECIALIST ERGONOMIST SERVICE IS TO:

- Provide expert advice and assistance to staff experiencing ergonomic difficulties in their work environment
- Provide recommendations around problem solving, risk assessment and the utilisation and where necessary the procurement of ergonomic equipment
- Provide ergonomic training in setting up work stations/ work systems
- Provide comprehensive assessments and recommendations that are reasonable, realistic and effective.

## HOW TO ACCESS SPECIALIST ERGONOMIC SERVICES?

The National Health and Safety Function has completed a procurement process to identify a specialist ergonomic service for the HSE. The contract has been awarded to;

**Universal Safety Associates Ltd.**, Phone: 091 485580, Email - [info@usafety.ie](mailto:info@usafety.ie)

Procurement of this service must be approved, funded and managed locally in order to ensure value for money.

## HEALTH & SAFETY WEBSITE:

Further support and information is available on our website at [www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing](http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing) in particular the **"Get up and Move"** campaign.

Alternatively contact the National Health & Safety Helpdesk on 1850 420 420 between 10:30-12:00 and 14:00 – 15.30 hrs Monday to Friday or log your health & safety request at: <http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing>

