



ERGONOMICS PROGRAM

ERGONOMICS POLICY STATEMENT

Ergonomics is defined as fitting the workplace to the worker and examining the interaction between the worker and his/her environment. Applying ergonomic principles can help reduce the risk of injuries or illnesses for those who work with computers, in jobs that require repetitive activities, and heavy materials handling.

Pyramid Management Group (PMG) is committed to the goal of preventing injuries and illnesses that arise from ergonomic hazards and risk factors. PMG is dedicated to reaching this goal by being proactive in the identification, analysis, prevention and control of ergonomic hazards and risks. PMG will employ the most effective training and education to meet or exceed all requirements set by this goal. Employee involvement is considered essential for the program to fully achieve its ultimate goal of ZERO injury.

The Ergonomics Program is also expected to enhance the general wellbeing and productivity of PMG's greatest asset – its employees. To assure that the objectives of employee safety, wellbeing and productivity are all being achieved, the program will be reviewed, and results evaluated on a semi-annual basis by Human Resources. Changes in the program will be agreed upon to best serve attainment of the goals and objectives set forth by this policy.

I. MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT

Implementation of an effective ergonomics program requires senior management support. It is important that all levels of management fully understand PMG's commitment to the program. Management's role in the success of the ergonomic effort encompasses:

- Ensuring that the Ergonomics Program activities and responsibilities are carried out and management's commitment is maintained at all levels.
- Communicating the various responsibilities of the Ergonomics Program so that all managers and employees know what is expected of them.
- Providing necessary resources and ensuring they are applied in a cost-effective manner.
 - i. Ensuring that PMG policies and practices do not discourage the early reporting of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD's), their signs and symptoms, and MSD hazards; and
 - ii. Employee participation in the Ergonomics Program

II. PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

All PMG employees, at all levels, are responsible for contributing to a safe and healthy workplace. Employees are encouraged to review information and to participate in education and training opportunities that can enable them to contribute to a healthy work environment. Employees are responsible for reporting first signs and symptoms of MSDs to their supervisor/manager contact without fear of discrimination or reprisal. Injured workers are responsible for adhering to the medical treatment plan provided, including transitional work, if required.

Managers

Managers play a leading role in the implementation of strategies to control MSDs in the workplace. These strategies include:

- Learning about MSD causes and control options.
- Providing resources (as available) to implement ergonomic solutions.
- Performing or requesting periodic risk assessments to identify ergonomic hazards; and
- Restructuring job tasks to reduce risk factors that contribute to MSDs.

Managers are encouraged to provide employees with appropriate ergonomics training, reinforcement, assistance, and evaluations (where appropriate). There are several ways this can be accomplished:

- Promote a safe and healthy work environment.
- Maintain an awareness of MSD risks.
- Have the work environment appropriately evaluated for proper ergonomic practices and conditions.
- Provide proper assist devices.
- Promptly report all employee injuries and/or employee complaints regarding MSD symptoms.
- When necessary, seek appropriate personnel assistance (Human Resources, Operations Directors, Office Managers, and supervisors) regarding ergonomic issues.
- When applicable, work with HR to provide adequate recovery time by allowing employees engaged in highly repetitive tasks the opportunity for frequent, short, alternative work activities and breaks; and
- Integrate ergonomics into total team safety management.

Employees

Employees are encouraged to promptly report ergonomic problems to their managers. Prompt implementation of workplace changes can significantly reduce the potential for severe injuries or illnesses. It is recommended that employees:

- Volunteer to participate in the PMG Safety Program.
- Adjust and use their workstation and equipment as outlined in the Workstation Adjustment Guide.
- Promptly report any minor discomfort experienced at the workstation.
- Follow safe work practices.

- Make effective use of break periods both scheduled and unscheduled to offset exposure to MSD risk factors.
- Perform simple exercises and stretches periodically throughout the day.
- Follow ergonomic recommendations; and
- Report work-related injuries to their manager.

PMG Safety Committee

The mission of the PMG Safety Committee is to reduce ergonomic risks in the PMG environment. Ergonomic evaluators are expected to:

- Coordinate the Ergonomics Program to reduce musculoskeletal injuries at PMG.
- Provide proactive surveillance of workstations on a regular basis to identify opportunities for making improvements.
- Provide guidance on modifying the workplace to minimize the potential for injuries and illnesses.
- Provide ergonomics training for employees and managers.
- Analyze and report trends in injury or incidence rates, and in injury severity.
- Maintain an ergonomics database.
- Evaluate individual and team workstations.
- Coordinate minor and major capital improvement programs, prepare required documentation, and coordinate long-range facility planning, including workstation planning; and
- Provide assistance and advice on the selection and procurement of ergonomically sound furniture and equipment.

The PMG HR Department should also provide resources to employees who have disabilities or have been injured on the job. The available range of services should support informed decision making through intervention, job accommodation analyses, and placement efforts. Other services should include vocational and personal counseling, performance of job and workstation analyses, and comparative analysis of medical restrictions and job requirements. Resources for employees who have been injured are expected to:

- Evaluate workstations, work areas, job task design, and required job skills.
- Identify accommodation options to enable continuation or resumption of productive work activities.
- Educate managers and employees about effective disability management techniques; and
- Provide guidance about workstation modification options.

III. PROCESS FOR MINIMIZING ERGONOMIC HAZARDS

Awareness of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)

Signs and symptoms of MSDs of the upper extremities include pain, numbness, or tingling of the fingers, wrists, elbows, or shoulders. Chronic back and neck problems may result in pain, numbness, or tingling

that radiates to the arms or legs, as well as limited back motion. Reducing the risk of MSD problems can be achieved by doing the following:

- Evaluating the workplace to identify MSD risk factors.
- Encouraging employee awareness and providing education.
- Using ergonomically appropriate work habits.
- Making workplace adjustments.
- Using ergonomically designed tools and furniture to allow flexibility for adjustments and proper individual posture.
- Performing workplace stretches to relieve physical stress.
- Varying work activities throughout the day including changing postures and using different muscle groups to relieve the buildup of static/dynamic muscle fatigue; and,
- Evaluating and intervening as soon as symptoms of MSD occur.

Hazard Identification

Early intervention is essential to the quick recovery and long-term prevention of MSDs. It is extremely important for employees to report any MSD symptoms as soon as possible to their supervisor/manager, Safety Committee, Human Resources, or their Operations contact/manager to schedule an ergonomic evaluation. MSDs usually develop gradually; symptoms such as pain, numbness, and tingling in the upper extremities are often ignored until the condition becomes chronic or permanent injury occurs. Tasks may also be identified for ergonomic review based upon input from the PMG Safety Committee, review/analysis of OSHA 300 Log data, and review/analysis of workers' compensation claims data.

IV. WORKPLACE EVALUATIONS

The Ergonomics Program and services described herein are applicable to all persons working at PMG. Priority will be given to employees with reported MSD symptoms, employees with diagnosed MSDs, and employees whose work tasks involve performance of high-risk activities.

Procedures

If you are experiencing any discomfort, we recommend you evaluate your work habits and your environment by noting the following and by completing a self-evaluation of your workstation using the workstation checklist included at the end of this document.

- Try to keep a neutral or straight wrist position. Remember to use wrist rests and other supports during any pauses to help you keep a comfortable wrist position.
- Don't use excessive force while typing or using the mouse. Many people use far more force than is necessary and this additional force puts an unnecessary strain on your tendons, joints, and soft tissues. Periodically check yourself especially during any stressful periods.
- Be aware that your hobbies or home activities can contribute to discomfort that you might feel at work. These hobbies or activities can include knitting, gardening, sewing, etc.
- Maintain good overall muscle tone with a sensible exercise program. See your physician for some recommendations on simple exercises that you can do relieve muscle stress.

- If you continue to experience problems, report them via e-mail to your supervisor, manager, Human Resources, or Operations contact/manager. Written communication of your problem will enable us to record and track your condition and treatment. Early intervention is often critical to avoid worsening your condition.

Employees who are not experiencing pain or discomfort, but want to ensure their workstations are properly configured, can refer to the ergonomic principles discussed in the Workstation Adjustment Guide to adjust their workstation to better suit their individual conditions.

Employees are also encouraged to participate in ergonomics training sessions. Unless qualified to perform an ergonomic evaluation, the manager or the employee should contact the PMG Safety Committee to request an ergonomic evaluation. The evaluation will focus on the physical configuration of the workplace, employee's work habits, and task modifications. Ergonomic risk factors such as repetitive motions, static exertions, forceful exertions, awkward postures (particularly of the arms, hands, and spine), and localized contact stresses will be assessed. The evaluator will propose solutions to eliminate or reduce risk factors found during the evaluation.

Ergonomic evaluations will be scheduled and performed as soon as possible, preferably within 15 to 30 working days after referral. Results of the evaluation including adjustments and recommendations will be recorded, and a follow-up review performed within 30 days of the initial evaluation.

It is important to ensure employees have adequate workspace to perform each of the tasks required by their jobs. Individuals' body size must be considered and will influence chair adjustments, the height of the work surface, and access to various elements of the workstation.

Ergonomic products do not have to be costly. For a reference, please refer to the Ergonomic Workstation Accessories section for guidance on the items recommended and the process for obtaining them. However, please note that if used incorrectly, even new, ergonomically designed products can contribute to employee discomfort; therefore, training in ergonomic principles and how to apply them to the individual's worksite is essential. Information obtained through training should be reinforced on a periodic basis with employees and a review of ergonomic devices performed.

Modifications of Work Practices

Improper configuration and use of workstations is a frequent contributor to the development of MSDs. A poorly designed workstation certainly has a negative impact on the user's comfort and productivity. It is essential that workstations be properly designed, adjusted, and used. Positive improvements may be as simple as repositioning furniture and equipment or purchasing ergonomically designed replacements.

V. MEDICAL MANAGEMENT

Consultation with your family health practitioner is recommended for improved health both in and out of the office. Discuss your job and its responsibilities with your physician to see what he/she suggests improving your physical wellbeing, and what can be incorporated during your workday.

When an employee experiences a work-related injury or illness, workers' compensation procedures need to be initiated. Employees are encouraged to report their condition to Human Resources to begin the medical management process. The program objective is to bring about an expedient recovery and return to productive work. Here again, employees shall be urged to practice early intervention.

VI. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The purpose of training and education is to ensure that employees are sufficiently informed about the ergonomics hazards to which they may be exposed and thus are able to participate actively in their own protection. The training program is to include the following individuals:

- All new and existing employees
- Managers and Administration; and
- PMG Safety Committee members

Appropriate specialized training is to be provided for the PMG Safety Committee members and personnel responsible for administering the Ergonomics Program. The program will provide an overview of the potential risk of ergonomics-related illnesses and injuries, their causes and early symptoms, the means of prevention, and treatment.

The program will also include a means for adequately evaluating its effectiveness, either by using employee interviews, testing, or observing work practices. These methods will determine if those who received the training understand the material and the work practices to be followed.

Training for Employees

Current and New Employees:

All current and new employees are to be provided basic information about:

- Common musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), and their signs and symptoms.
- The importance of reporting MSDs and their signs and symptoms early and the consequences of failing to report them early.
- How to report MSDs and their signs and symptoms in the workplace; and
- The kinds of risk factors, jobs and work activities associated with MSD hazards.

Job-Specific Training:

Training is provided for each employee and their manager whose jobs require repetitive activities. The training is to include but is not limited to:

- PMG Ergonomics Program and the employee's role in it.
- The signs and symptoms of MSDs and ways of reporting them.
- The risk factors and any MSD hazards in the employee's job.
- PMG's plan and timetable for addressing the MSD hazards identified.
- The controls used to address MSD hazards; and
- The employee's role in evaluating the effectiveness of controls.

In addition, the training for ergonomic team members and/or each employee involved in setting up and managing the Ergonomics Program shall address:

- How to set up, manage, and evaluate an ergonomics program; and
- How to identify and analyze MSD hazards and select and evaluate measures to reduce the hazards.

VII. Periodic Program Evaluation

An evaluation of the Ergonomics Program shall be conducted periodically to ensure that our program is most effective. Deficiencies found within our program will be promptly corrected.

Program evaluation consists of:

- Consulting with employees in problem jobs to assess views on the effectiveness of the program and to identify any significant deficiencies in the program.
- Evaluating the elements of the PMG Ergonomics Program to ensure they are functioning properly.
- Determining whether MSD hazards are being identified and addressed; and
- Determining whether the program is achieving positive results, as demonstrated by such indicators as reductions in the number and severity of MSDs, increases in the number of problem jobs in which MSD hazards have been controlled, reductions in the number of jobs posing MSD hazards to employees, or any other measure that demonstrates program effectiveness.

VIII. Recordkeeping

Written or electronic records of employee reports of MSDs, MSD signs and symptoms, and MSD hazards, responses to such reports, job hazard analyses, hazard control measures, ergonomics program evaluations, and records of work restrictions and the health care provider’s written opinions are maintained. Employees and their representatives are provided access to these records.

All such records are maintained for 3 years or until replaced by updated records. Records of health care provider’s opinions are kept for the duration of the employee’s employment plus 3 years.

If the employee has worked for less than 1 year, employees are provided with these records at the end of his or her employment and are not retained.

WORKSTATION CHECKLIST

	Yes	No
Is your monitor at or slightly below eye level?		

Is your head upright and at a comfortable height?		
Are your elbows close to your body?		
Are your forearms straight with elbows around 90°?		
Are your wrists "Neutral" and straight?		
Are your wrists or forearms resting on a soft surface?		
Does your lower back contact the seat back or lumbar cushion?		
Are both your feet flat on the floor or supported on a footrest?		
Is the top of your screen even with your eyes? (If you wear bifocals you may want the screen lower in order to use your bifocals)		
Is the monitor approximately at arm's length (20-32 inches)?		
Is the screen centered and in the right position on your desk?		
Are you using as little force as possible when typing or using your mouse?		
Is your mouse next to and at the same height as your keyboard?		

- Periodically completing this workstation checklist will help assure that your workstation is adjusted for you and your changing workstyle!

OFFICE ERGONOMICS GUIDE

In the professional services industry, computers are used throughout all workplaces to input, store, process, and transfer information quickly and efficiently. Thus, people are spending more time than ever sitting in chairs, typing on keyboards, manipulating mice, and viewing monitor displays.

This ergonomics guide discusses proper workstation adjustments, working posture, work habits, and stretches to help improve your comfort and eliminate any discomfort that may arise.



COMPUTER WORKSTATION ADJUSTMENTS

Chair

The chair should be adjusted to provide maximum support. Adjust the height of the chair so that the feet are flat on the floor and the knees are at a 90 to 120-degree angle. Adjust the height of



the chair's backrest to support the natural inward curve in the lumbar area of the spine. Adjust the backrest angle so that the hip-torso angle is 90-120 degrees. If the chair's backrest is "unlocked" and moves freely back and forth, adjust the tension knob (located under the seat) to provide appropriate support. If equipped with adjustable arms, raise, or lower the arms so that your forearms are supported at your side.

Keyboard and Mouse

The keyboard should be located directly in front of you. Type with your arms at a 90-100-degree angle and your elbows at keyboard height. Keep your wrists straight, your elbows at your side, and your shoulders relaxed. Use a light touch when typing on the keyboard. Rest your hands comfortably during pauses in typing. The keyboard height adjustment pegs should be flat, not upright. The mouse or trackball should be placed directly adjacent to the keyboard. You may be required to raise your chair to type with your arms at 90 - 100 degrees. If necessary, utilize a footrest if your feet are off the floor.

Monitor

The monitor should be placed directly in front of you in order to naturally face forward. Set the height of the monitor so that the top of the screen is located even with or slightly below eye-level. For bi-focal wearers, the monitor screen should be well below eye level. The goal is to keep your head/neck naturally upright without bending your neck forward or backward.



Single Monitor



Dual Monitors

Place the monitor at a comfortable viewing distance from you--about arm's length. To minimize glare and/or reflections, change the monitor tilt by adjusting the base. Also, locate the monitor perpendicular to the outside windows to avoid glare. Changing your system colors to dark letters on a light background is also helpful.

WORK MATERIALS & WORK HABITS



Source documents should be located directly adjacent or just below the computer screen to eliminate repeated head turning and refocusing. It is also helpful to tilt and raise source documents to avoid leaning forward in your chair. Avoid awkward cradling of the phone between your head and shoulder. Keep frequently used work materials within a full arm's reach. Keep your desk surface and the underside of your desk free from obstacles and clutter. Also, keep your printer off your work surface. This will increase desk space and require you to get out of the chair and help increase circulation and blood flow.

The best posture and the best equipment will not prevent discomfort and fatigue if you sit for several hours in one position. To improve your body's blood flow and circulation, take mini-breaks and move around throughout the day by getting out of your chair, standing, stretching, and/or walking to the water fountain.

Adjust your chair periodically to match each type of work performed (for example, lean back in the chair or “free float” when talking on phone). To reduce stress and shoulder discomfort, frequently check to ensure that your elbows are at your side and your shoulders are relaxed.

Give your eyes frequent breaks throughout the day. It is helpful to look away from the monitor and focus in on a distant object for about 5-seconds about every half-hour. Eye drops and blinking will help keep the eyes properly lubricated.

Problem	Possible Solutions
Hands, wrists, and/or arms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place keyboard at elbow height. • Type with straight wrists. • Provide a cushioned wrist rest. • Keep the elbows in and shoulders relaxed (not extended) while typing. • Use less force while typing. • Keep the keyboard’s height-adjustment pegs flat.
Neck and/or shoulders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position monitor and keyboard directly in front of you. • Place top of screen at or slightly below eye level. • No cradling of phone between neck and shoulder. • Keep the elbows in and shoulders relaxed while typing. • Place source materials adjacent to or slightly below the monitor. • Locate phone on opposite side of dominant hand. • Keep frequently used materials within 18-inches.
Back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust the chair so that the feet are flat on the floor with the knees and hips at the same height. • Adjust the angle and height of the seat back. • Ensure adequate lumbar support is provided.
Eyes and/or head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the monitor directly in front and at about arms- length from user. • Clean the screen and/or glare filter. • Reduce glare by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positioning the screen perpendicular to outside windows. - Closing the shades or blinds. - Tilting the screen to reduce reflections. • Keep distance from the eyes to the screen and source documents the same. • Look away from the monitor and focus in on a distant object for about 5-seconds every half-hour. • Use eye drops and blink more frequently to keep eyes properly lubricated.

Caution: Start out easy and perform all stretches slowly. Hold each stretch for about 5-seconds. If pain or discomfort exists, consult your doctor before practicing these stretches.

1. Deep Breathing - Breathe in slowly through your nose. Hold for 2 seconds, then exhale through your mouth. Repeat.
2. Neck - With your head upright, turn your head slowly to one side and hold. Turn your head to the other side and hold. Repeat several times.
3. Shoulders - With your arms at your side, roll your shoulders forward and backward using wide circular motions. Repeat.
4. Upper Torso - Clasp your hands behind your head and slowly turn to one side and hold. Slowly turn to other side and hold. Repeat.
5. Trunk Extension - While standing, place hands on your back at waist level. Tuck your chin in and slowly arch your upper body backwards and hold. Slowly move to an erect position. Relax and repeat.
6. Legs - While seated with your back against the backrest, extend one leg completely straight until you feel tension on the underside. Hold for a count of 5 seconds. Repeat with your opposite leg.
7. Eyes - Move your eyes in all directions--up, down, side-to-side, clockwise, and counter-clockwise.
8. Forearms and Wrists – Place your forearm parallel to your chest. Gently grasp the fingers of one hand and push the fingers backward until you feel slight tension. Hold for a count of 5 seconds. Repeat the stretch with the opposite hand.
9. Wrists, Hands, and Fingers - Make a fist with both hands, then spread your fingers outward. Relax. Repeat.

END.