

Preventing Workplace Overexertion and Fatigue

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As COVID continues to be a global concern and as many organizations are finding new normal ways to work, there is concern for workplace overexertion and fatigue. Overexertion can be a result of physical or emotional strain or pressure caused when you push yourself beyond your physical limits. We are sharing some guidance provided by the National Safety Council, to encourage you to be thoughtful in your daily workday and prevent overexertion injury and fatigue.

First, it is important to understand that there are an estimated 3.5 million injuries taking place each year in the US that are related to overexertion. These injuries are typically caused by one of these activities:

- **Poor positioning**—this entails holding an awkward or stationary posture (e.g., sitting, bending, twisting or kneeling) for an extended period of time.
- **Repetitive motions**—this includes tasks in which the same movements or actions must be done repeatedly with minimal breaks, such as typing, stacking, packing or scanning.
- **Physical labor**—this includes manual tasks that require extra force, such as lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, gripping or using heavy tools.

These injuries usually make themselves known through soreness, burning, throbbing, swelling or even loss of function in the affected area. Ignoring these injuries can allow them to progress into painful and potential long-term complications. Take steps to reduce your risk of fatigue and/or overexertion; pace yourself, take breaks and alternate tasks. Use the following tips to help prevent injuries:

- **Lift with caution.** When lifting, use safe techniques. Get a solid grip on the item you are lifting and hold it close to your body. Raise, carry and lower the item slowly and smoothly—never bend, reach or twist while lifting.
- **Practice proper ergonomics.** Set up your workstation in a way that prioritizes ergonomics and will keep you comfortable throughout the day. With many staff still working remotely, take the time to set up a proper workstation at home. It is important for remote workers to keep to a normal work routine.
- **Know your limits.** Don't force your body to do more than it can handle. Define work tasks that will require a team to assure all tasks are completed safely. Offer to help and don't hesitate to ask a co-worker for assistance if you aren't sure you can perform a task on your own. This is especially important as staff changes and worksite changes have continued to occur in recent weeks/months.

As always, if you experience a work related injury it is important to report it promptly, following your employer guidelines for obtaining care.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please call a member of the BHS Insurance Public Garden team at (800) 350-7676.

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