



**WeberKnapp**

# **ERGONOMIC EQUIPMENT INTEGRATION CHECKLIST**

Bad ergonomics are bad for business. Even work environments that historically have been considered low-risk for injuries now regularly conduct ergonomic safety assessments. This is because, while serious injuries in the workplace have declined, we've seen an increase in musculoskeletal disorders related to repetitive stress.

From chronic back pain to carpal tunnel syndrome, we've all seen how much damage bad ergonomics can do. Around 364 million workdays are lost every year due to strains, back pain, and other musculoskeletal conditions.

Integrating proper ergonomic equipment is crucial to ensuring not just longevity of your business, but more importantly, the safety and comfort of your employees.

But with the plethora of ergonomic equipment available, choosing the right ergonomic equipment can be challenging. This checklist aims to identify proper ergonomic equipment for the Manufacturing, Medical, Construction, and Office-space industries:

# OFFICE ERGONOMICS:

Office ergonomics is all about productivity, both for the workers and the managers trying to maximize staff ROI. Reducing stress and strain by using ergonomic office products helps employees stay focused and perform better and more efficiently. It also improves their mood, reducing tension and conflict.

In other words, it pays to keep employees comfortable on the job. Be mindful of the following equipment:

## □ ADJUSTABLE KEYBOARD LIFT MECHANISM:

Ergonomic issues such as shoulder pain, neck or back strain, or carpal tunnel syndrome can be combatted with a keyboard mechanism and tray set that slides out of the way and adjusts to the user's height. Adjustable keyboard trays help users keep their elbows level with or above the wrists and in a relaxed position near the body.

## □ KEYBOARD PALM REST:

You've probably seen office workers with their hands and wrists wrapped in an attempt to treat carpal tunnel syndrome. A keyboard palm rest, in combination with an adjustable keyboard lift mechanism, can go a long way toward preventing this painful and disruptive condition.

## □ MONITOR ARM LIFT:

The perfect height and orientation of a computer monitor varies from person to person. Ideally, the user can adjust the monitor's position to prevent eye, neck, and back strain.

A monitor arm lift can hold one monitor or more, depending on the lift's design.

## □ SIT-STAND DESK:

Standing up once in a while can help prevent several job-related health problems. A sit-stand desk mechanism makes it easy to alter positions without interrupting workflow. It's important to choose a desk with a load-bearing capacity that meets the needs of your workplace and doesn't damage the lift mechanism.

## □ CPU HOLDER:

A CPU holder allows users to hang the units under their desks. This setup provides several benefits, such as:

- Mobility with sit-stand desks so the computer moves with the desk, preventing detached cables
- More space
- Easy accessibility with a swivel function that brings the back of the tower within reach
- Damage prevention by keeping the computer off the floor, where it's susceptible to dirt, dust, and perhaps a few kicks when you're getting the pinwheel "loading" icon for too long

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*Young employees value mobility, and there are many ways to give them what they want. You don't have to be a tech giant like Google or Apple to have a fun, comfortable office. Just start with the small stuff.*

*An investment of a few thousand can mean an ROI of longer employee tenures and many, many hours of increased productivity.*



# MANUFACTURING ERGONOMICS:

Many manufacturing facilities use ergonomically designed products to accommodate people of different body shapes and sizes. Particularly of interest are:

## ❑ MONITOR ARMS:

These are used on printing equipment, CNC machines, packaging stations, and a wealth of other equipment. Users can adjust the height and angle so they aren't twisting their bodies or straining their eyes looking up or down.

## ❑ KEYBOARD AND MOUSE TRAYS:

Similar to adjustable monitor arms, keyboard and mouse trays are used throughout the manufacturing industry. Adjustable trays allow people of all shapes and sizes to use the same equipment comfortably.

## ❑ COMPUTERS ON WHEELS (COWS):

While most common in the medical industry, COWs can also be used by shop supervisors or plant managers to transport their machines from one area to another. They are also great behind the scenes in prototyping and engineering, quality-assurance inspections, and easy access to electronic work instructions at manufacturing stations.

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*Equipment like the examples above must be adjustable so that no one has to strain to use them. For instance, CNC-like machinery where workers are programming output often have their own built-in screens, keyboards, and computer trays. By choosing models with adjustable accessories, your workforce is protected.*

*While ergonomic manufacturing workstations may differ from job site to job site, ensure that your equipment is adjustable, easy to use, and comfortable for your workers.*

# MEDICAL ERGONOMICS:

## ❑ MEDICAL CENTRIFUGES:

Today's most ergonomically sound centrifuge medical equipment can be loaded at a low height and is easy to close without significant force. This helps reduce strain on the professional using it, regardless of height.

The best way to achieve this safe and convenient solution is with a counterbalance or spring-assisted hinge mechanism on the lid.

## ❑ MICROSCOPE SLIDE STAINING EQUIPMENT:

Prolonged microscope use can cause neck and back pain -- why add another safety concern on top of that? Today's ergonomic medical microscope equipment can help make for a more comfortable working environment.

Outfitting your microscope slide staining equipment with counterbalance hinges can make the relatively heavy lid easy to lift. (See the Ventana Benchmark Ultra for an example.) This prevents the lid from rattling the loaded slides when it closes. A counterbalanced lid provides both safety and convenience.

## ❑ BLOOD DRAW STATIONS:

Ergonomics in medical laboratory applications apply to the patient, too.

Take blood draw stations, for instance. Creative design can enhance both patient comfort and nurse convenience.

Consider adding a flat surface with a hinge mechanism that folds over in front of the patients so they can put their arm on it comfortably. You can flip the armrest up and to the side when not in use. This feature makes it easier for patients, especially those sick or elderly, to get in and out of the chair.

## ❑ TRANSFER CHAIRS, ARM LATCHES, & FOOT RESTS:

Transfer chairs are necessary to get patients from one room to another for treatment, therapy, or discharge. If you're serious about improving ergonomics, you'll want to invest in an ergonomic transport chair that adjusts to any patient and facilitates the transfer process.

A chair that accomplishes:

- Relieves pressure on the assistant's back
- Stabilizes weight distribution
- Makes the transfer more comfortable for the patient
- Keeps the patient's feet off the floor

Ergonomic footrests on the bottom of the chair allow patients to rest their legs instead of holding them up during transport. Then, when they need to stand up, they can put weight on the rest.

## ❑ MEDICAL MOBILE COMPUTER CARTS:

A computer cart on wheels has been a common sight in hospital wings for years. Today there are a huge variety of design options and accessories to make it the nurse's equivalent of a Swiss army knife.

Studies estimate that nonadjustable desks cause about 2x as many workplace health issues than adjustable desks. Popular features on mobile medical carts include adjustable keyboard tray mechanisms and adjustable desk height.

The versatility of these workstations is a big benefit to medical ergonomics, plus they have other positive side effects. They're a more efficient alternative to running back and forth to a nurse's station to enter data.

# CONSTRUCTION ERGONOMICS:

When most people hear “ergonomics,” they think of office workers in cubicles. But ergonomics – designing or modifying the working environment for the worker’s health and comfort – is crucial to the construction industry, too.

One of the biggest problems with ergonomic injuries is that they can go unnoticed until they become debilitating.

Luckily, building good ergonomic practices can prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders. But you can’t practice “good ergonomics” without first identifying every potential ergonomic hazard in construction sites your company works at.

## ❑ HEAVY LIFTING:

Many construction tools and materials are a challenge to lift -- weaklings need not apply. Just about everything on site seems to be heavy. Lifting 50-plus lbs. is hard on the body over time – especially if you’re doing it wrong.

Heavy lids and other hinged equipment have been the source of not only sore backs, but broken fingers and concussions as well. Many companies use counterbalanced and motion-controlled lids and doors on their equipment. These technologies can reduce the weight of lids and other hinged devices from 100 lbs. to 10 lbs. -- or less.

## ❑ REPETITIVE TASKS:

Construction and industrial workers often have to perform the same lift over and over ... and over.

When you have to perform a task hundreds or thousands of times, it can cause excessive wear and tear on your joints. It sounds silly, but even the most basic movements, like unpacking fasteners every day, can cause repetitive stress injuries.

Construction work is especially hand-intensive. The human hand is an impressive piece of engineering, but all those little muscles, tendons, ligaments, bones, and joints can only hold up to so much repetitive use. Your crew should take advantage of grips and gloves whenever possible to protect their hands during intensive work.

## ❑ USING THE WRONG TOOLS:

Home mechanics may need to improvise with the tools at hand, but professional construction sites should have the right tools for the job at all times. Otherwise, workers are apt to needlessly hurt themselves.

A construction worker is more likely to use the right tool -- and the right way -- with proper training. Don’t leave it up to the employee to figure out.

## ❑ WORKING ON HARD SURFACES:

Working on your knees on concrete or other hard surfaces becomes soul-crushing after a while. Done for years, it can destroy your health, too.

Workers should wear protective gear like kneepads if they have to kneel. If you can swing it, bring the work up to their level with an ergonomic power lift or work table.

Proper ergonomics is a two-way avenue. By giving employees the right equipment, and with them following best practices, both sides benefit. The staff will stay happy and productive, and you’ll keep your best employees on the job longer while avoiding worker’s comp claims.

Not sure where to start when integrating ergonomics into your workers setup? Contact one of the Experts at Weber Knapp today for more information on all things Ergonomic related.



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