



## Ergonomics for Schools

Ergonomics is the science and practice of designing jobs, tools, equipment and environments to match the capabilities and limitations of the human body. Ergonomics has traditionally focused on the workplace, and school staff – teachers, custodians, kitchen workers, librarians, etc. – can all benefit from the application of ergonomic principles to their jobs. But ergonomics can also be applied to students, helping with computer workstation set up, backpack design and use, as well as their after school jobs.



### Ergonomics Tips for Staff

#### Teachers:

- ✓ Set up your computer workstation for a comfortable posture. See the web sites listed on the back for guidelines.
- ✓ Avoid bending at the back for long periods when working with students. Pull up a chair and sit down, or squat for short periods.

#### Custodians:

- ✓ Avoid lifting heavy mop buckets to pour them out into sinks. Use a floor drain and tip the bucket over, or get a bottom-emptying mop bucket.

#### Kitchen workers:

- ✓ Store heavier supplies on shelves between knee and waist level. Break apart heavy boxes and put items away individually.
- ✓ Use carts to move soup pots, supplies, and other heavy items rather than carrying them.

#### Librarians:

- ✓ Set up your computer workstation for a comfortable posture. See the web sites listed on the back for guidelines.
- ✓ Leave frequently checked-out books on a cart near the front.

#### Administrators:

- ✓ When planning for furniture and equipment purchases, first determine how the product will be used, and apply ergonomic principles to select the best one.

### Ergonomics Tips for Students

#### At home and at school:

- ✓ Set up your computer workstation for a comfortable posture. See the web sites listed on the back for guidelines.
- ✓ Limit your computer use to 30 minutes at time. Be active during your breaks.
- ✓ Avoid overloading your backpack. It should not weigh more than 10% to 15% of your own body weight.
- ✓ Limit the amount of time you spend playing computer games. Switch between games that allow you to use different controllers so that you don't wear out your thumbs.

#### If you have an after school job:

- ✓ Use equipment to help you avoid heavy lifting, carrying, working with your hands overhead, bending at the back, repetitive motions, and other potential causes of injury.
- ✓ Work with your employer to find better ways to work using ergonomic principles.
- ✓ Visit some of the web sites on the back of this page if you want to find out more about safety and health for young workers.

See the other side for some helpful web sites.



## Ergonomics for Schools – Helpful Web Sites

### **For Staff**

#### **Teachers:**

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Guidelines on setting up computer workstations for adults:  
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/IPUB/417-133-000.pdf>

Guidelines on setting up classroom computers for students:  
<http://www.orosha.org/cergos/whatodo1.html>  
<http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/MBergo/schoolguide.html>



#### **Custodians:**

Ergonomics assessment of custodial work:  
<http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/ErgoPROJECTS/custodian.html>

#### **Librarians:**

Computer guidelines for libraries: <http://lib.ucr.edu/ergolib/>  
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/ergonomics/index.html>

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#### **Administrators:**

General information on ergonomics in schools:  
<http://www.aota.org/nonmembers/area1/links/link240.asp>

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Resource for finding ergonomics ideas to solve problems:  
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/wisha/ergoideas/>

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### **For Students**

General information on ergonomics in schools: <http://www.ergonomics4schools.com/>

Computer use: <http://www.orosha.org/cergos/>

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Backpacks: <http://www.aota.org/backpack/index.asp?AUD=2>  
<http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/MBergo/schoolguide.html#risks%20of%20backpacks>

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#### **Young worker safety and health:**

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/scs/workstandards/teenworker.htm>  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/youth/>  
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html>

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