**Instructions:** Use this template to create your written ergonomics process. Fill in your information where you see the blue fill-in prompts and blanks. You can change or delete anything that doesn’t apply to your company.

At the end of this template are L&I Tips and Tools to help you at every step.

**Fill in your company name here**

**Our Ergonomics Process to Prevent Sprain and Strain Injuries**

**Purpose**

Our goal is to prevent sprains and strains, such as back, shoulder and wrist injuries, by using this 5-step ergonomics process as part of our overall Accident Prevention Program.

**Step 1: Involving Our Employees**

We train our supervisors and employees on ergonomics to give them the additional skills to help us find hazards, and create solutions that minimize the risk of injury.

Supervisors and employees receive training as part of new hire orientation, with refresher training completed every \_\_\_\_ years. Training topics include:

* Basic principles of ergonomics.
* Risks of sprains and strains specific to their work.
* Work methods and proper use of tools and equipment to reduce the risk of injury.
* How to report hazards and make suggestions for improving their jobs.
* Early symptoms of sprains and strains, and how to report them to their supervisor.

. Involve Employees

**Step 2: Finding Potential Hazards**

(Fill in the names or titles here) lead our injury prevention efforts by:

* Including ergonomics when making changes to facilities, equipment, and processes, or purchasing new tools.
* Routinely walking through the workplace to look for potential hazards such as:
  + Manual lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, or other physically demanding work.
  + Work done in awkward postures, like bending, reaching, or twisting.
  + Tasks with hand intensive work, such as using tools, assembling parts, or packing boxes.
* Asking employees about their work and potential hazards.
* Investigating reports of sprain and strain symptoms and injuries to find root causes.
* Reviewing injury records and workers’ compensation claims to find tasks and trends related to sprain and strain injuries.

When we find jobs with obvious hazards and solutions, we proceed to Step 4.

When we are not sure the job poses an injury risk, we assess it in Step 3

**Step 3: Assessing Potential Hazards**

(Fill in the names or titles here) assess jobs with potential hazards to determine the risk of sprain and strain injuries. We use the assessment tools listed below to evaluate our jobs.

List the assessment tools used at your workplace in the table below

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

After we assess potential problems, we work towards finding solutions in Step 4.

**Step 4: Fixing Hazards**

(Fill in the names or titles here) work with employees and the safety committee to find solutions.

We consider a number of things when looking at potential solutions, including:

* How quickly and easily the solution can be put in place.
* How much a solution reduces a hazard.
* The number of employees that use the solution.

Solutions that can be quickly put in place, greatly reduce the hazards, and are used by many employees are tried first.

When it will take some time to put an effective solution into place, we will use a short-term fix to minimize the risk of injury and make a plan for a more permanent solution.

Employees are retrained after changes are made to work processes, equipment and tools.

We include solutions such as improved work methods or proper use of equipment in our operating procedures and on-the-job training.

After a solution has been used for a while, we make sure it works well in Step 5.

**Step 5: Checking for Success**

(Fill in names or titles here) re-assess tasks and talk to employees to see if a fix is working as planned, and that it didn’t create any new hazards or other problems.

We follow-up after:

* 2 – 4 weeks to see if a solution is working.
* 3 – 6 months to see if the solution is still being used as intended.

When we find a solution that does not reduce the risk of injury or is not being used as planned, we repeat steps 4 and 5.

Every year we review our ergonomics process. During our review we look at:

* How effective the solutions have been in improving employee well-being, productivity, and product quality.
* Injury reports to make sure the solutions have prevented sprains and strains.

We adjust our process as needed to ensure continued success.

**Ergonomics Process Template Tips and Tools**

Setting up your process.

* We recommend designating an ergonomics coordinator to be responsible for your process.
* Supervisors, and the ergonomics process coordinator if you have one, should work with your employees and safety committee in implementing Steps 2 – 5.
* Use the Ergonomics Process Workbooks listed below to help create and manage your process.
* More information on an ergonomics process can be found on the [L&I web site](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/ergonomics-process).

Step 1.

* We recommend supervisors, employees and safety committees take L&I’s on-line [ergonomic process training course](https://wisha-training.lni.wa.gov/training/presentations/ergotrainingworkers.pptx).
* We recommend refresher training every 3 years and whenever changes are made to work processes, tools and equipment.
* Reinforce this training by discussing ergonomics in staff, safety committee and production meetings.
* It is best practice to keep records of this training.
* The [Step 1 Workbook](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/_docs/ergo-workbook-step1.pdf) list ways for your employees to help with your process.

Step 2.

* Talk to your employees about potential hazards by asking them what jobs:
* are physically demanding
* make them tired or sore at the end of the day
* are difficult to get done on time
* have quality problems
* Use the checklists and the other ways listed in the [Step 2 Workbook](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/_docs/ergo-workbook-step2.pdf) to look at existing tasks and when planning for new facilities, equipment, and processes, or purchasing new tools.

Step 3.

* Sometimes hazards are obvious, and solutions can be quickly put in place with little or no evaluation. Go for these easy fixes first.
* The [Step 3 Workbook](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/_docs/ergo-workbook-step3.pdf) has a Job Risk Priority Worksheet to help you quickly assess and rank which jobs to work on first.
* When you need a more detailed evaluation of a specific task (like lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling) use these [basic and advanced evaluation tools](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/evaluation-tools).

Step 4.

* Ask your employees for their ideas to make their work safer and easier to do.
* L&I has many [solution resources](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/solutions-for-sprains-strains#solution-tips) to help fix hazards including a “[What Works](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/solutions-for-sprains-strains#what-works)” list of effective solutions you can use and some not so effective solutions to avoid.
* The [Step 4 Workbook](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/_docs/ergo-workbook-step4.pdf) describes how to create and pick the best fixes.
* You can also use a [cost-benefit analysis calculator](https://www.pshfes.org/cost-calculator) to justify more costly solutions like changes to facilities or purchasing new tools and equipment.

Step 5.

* Sometimes finding a successful solution takes more than one try. Modify a solution or try a different one until you are satisfied with the result.
* Use the same assessment tools used to evaluate the job to determine if the solution reduced the risk of injury.
* The [Step 5 Workbook](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/_docs/ergo-workbook-step5.pdf) can help you see how your process is working.
* Remember to recognize and celebrate your successes during meetings, in company newsletters and on safety bulletin boards.

[Contact L&I](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/get-help-with-ergonomics) if you need help creating your ergonomics process.