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The inclusion of ergonomic products shown and described in this publication should not be interpreted as an endorsement or recommendation for any specific product or vendor but rather an attempt to display a range of choices available.
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*NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training*
The preparation of the Ergonomic Product Guide was a joint endeavor by the New York State Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER), the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), the NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training (Partnership), the NYS & CSEA Statewide Safety and Health Committee, and the NYS & CSEA Statewide Ergonomics Subcommittee. This guide was developed through the assistance of these organizations.

**Introduction**

An Ergonomics Guide

This guide educates direct care facility managers and employees who work in non-direct care departments and promotes a safe and productive workplace by providing information on how to decrease the injury risk factors associated with performing certain job tasks.

It also provides the reader with some basic knowledge about ergonomics and information on how to incorporate these principles when purchasing and using tools and equipment so the chance of developing a work-related injury, such as a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD), is reduced.

The following non-direct care departments are the focus of this guide: food service; groundskeeping/maintenance; laundry/housekeeping; and mail and supply/shipping and receiving.

While clerical and secretarial employees may benefit from this information, they are encouraged to review a related resource entitled Recommendations for an Agency Policy on Computer Workstation Ergonomics developed by GOER and CSEA. This publication, which was distributed in March 2005 by the NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training, is available online at [www.goer.state.ny.us/ergo/index.html](http://www.goer.state.ny.us/ergo/index.html).
Create a safe and productive workplace

Ergonomics is the science of designing the job to accomodate the worker, rather than forcing the worker’s body to fit the job. Ergonomists study the relationship of humans to their working environment and seek to improve working conditions and increase efficiency.

Individuals employed in food service; groundskeeping/maintenance; laundry/housekeeping; and mail and supply/shipping and receiving work hard and want to prevent injuries while doing their jobs. This booklet describes some of the knowledge, tools, and equipment available that can help reduce the chances of developing a work-related injury, such as a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD).

Examples of MSDs include:

- carpal tunnel syndrome
- back injuries
- rotator cuff syndrome
- trigger finger
- sciatica
- tenosynovitis
- tendonitis.

These injuries are common among workers in the occupations covered in this guide and can be minimized or eliminated by reducing or eliminating the risk factors that cause the injury.
The 6 factors you should be aware of:

**FORCE**
The amount of muscular effort required to perform a task, such as pushing, pulling, lifting, or holding. Higher levels of force are associated with an increased risk of injury. Examples: lifting pails of water, pushing heavy vacuums, carrying large pans of food, handling garbage or linen, or moving furniture.

**REPETITION**
Doing the same motion over and over again, particularly in association with high forces or when there is no time to rest muscles. Generally, the greater the number of repetitions results in the greater the degree of risk. Examples: mopping, chopping food, or using a spray bottle.

**AWKWARD STATIC POSTURES**
Putting your body into an uncomfortable position for an extended period of time. It is generally believed the more a joint deviates from its natural position, the greater the risk of injury. Examples: bending over a sink, reaching to clean overhead, standing in one area for a long period of time, or lifting food trays above shoulder level or below knee level.
CONTACT STRESS

Contact stress occurs when a hard or sharp edge presses against a soft part of the body. Examples: a bucket handle too small for the size of the hand carrying it, a poorly designed tool, or a wrist resting on the corner of a table.

EXTREME TEMPERATURES

High temperatures increase the risk of heat stress and heat stroke. Cold temperatures are associated with an increased risk of musculoskeletal injuries. Examples: working in a hot kitchen for an extended period of time or working unprotected outdoors during the winter.

VIBRATION

Vibration can be whole body vibration, usually associated with the operation of a vehicle, or localized vibration, usually associated with the use of a power-operated hand held tool. Examples: riding a motorized lawn mower or using a power tool, such as a drill.
Communication is the Key

Supervisors and employees should work together to address risk factors in the work environment. They should review how job tasks are performed and discuss whether there is a negative impact on the body and, if so, decide how to minimize it. Additionally, a joint labor-management ergonomics or safety and health committee may be a helpful forum for discussing ways to identify and reduce risk factors.

Examples of how to reduce risk factors include:

• Putting loads or equipment on a rolling device, if possible, or attaching wheels to equipment, may limit the amount of force needed to push or pull objects.

• Maintaining carts, hampers, and gurneys in good working order can minimize the amount of force exerted while using these items.

• Pushing rather than pulling equipment, when possible, as well as keeping arms close to the body and pushing with the whole body, not just using arms, can reduce the force on the arms and legs.

• Using power tools, rather than manual tools, when performing the same motion repeatedly can reduce repetitive stress.

• Choosing appropriate hand tools (e.g., ergonomic knives, bent-handled pliers) that allow the wrist to remain straight while doing finger intensive tasks can lessen strains and sprains of wrists, arms, and shoulders.

• Using buffers and vacuums that have lightweight construction and adjustable handle heights can lower the force associated with repetition and help minimize awkward posture.
(continued from page 6)

- Using tools with extended handles, or using step stools or ladders can avoid or limit overhead reaching.

- Raising the height of surfaces (e.g., putting a large plastic basin upside down in the bottom of a sink when washing items) or using spring-loaded platforms may reduce bending or reaching motion.

- Avoiding a tight and static grip and using padded non-slip handles can help to reduce contact stress.

- Using spray bottles or equipment with trigger bars rather than single finger triggers may reduce stress on the fingers by distributing the force more evenly across the hand.

- Wearing gloves, knee pads or other protective equipment can help reduce contact stress.

- Covering extremities (fingers, toes, etc.), that are often the first part of the body to be affected by extreme temperatures, may reduce exposure injuries.

- Vibration-dampening devices and vibration-dampening gloves may help to minimize stress vibration.
Equipment can make the job safer and easier

The purchase of appropriate equipment may eliminate or minimize injury by reducing the risk factors.

When selecting equipment:

Many products are described as ergonomically designed, but using the product is the only way to find out.

- After appropriate on-the-job training, employees need to try a new product for at least a week or two before they can decide whether it will work for them in their particular situation.

- An ergonomically designed tool should make the job easier and be appropriate for the specific task.

- Keep in mind that one size does not fit all. A certain tool could be great for one person or job, but might not suit another person or job.

- Employee input is very important and should be encouraged. Their knowledge and on-the-job experiences make them valuable resources for suggestions on how to improve the job using these products.
Managers and employees should take the initiative! New products are emerging all the time. These products may be considered for incorporation into a larger ergonomics program in the workplace. Increasing one’s knowledge of ergonomics can help reduce the risk of injury as well as the difficulty of the job.

A listing of useful web resources is located at the end of this booklet.

**How to find out about more products:**
There are thousands of different websites that discuss ergonomics and claim to sell ergonomically designed products. Using an Internet search engine, such as Google™ or Yahoo®, should yield several results. Some helpful key words to use in the search are: **ergonomics, ergonomically designed, daily living aids, human factor design, or workplace safety.**

**Examples of Ergonomic Products:**
The next section contains examples of different products that may help increase the safety and ease of performing jobs in the following categories:

- Food Service
- Groundskeeping/Maintenance
- Laundry/Housekeeping
- Mail and Supply/Shipping and Receiving

The inclusion of these products should not be interpreted as an endorsement or recommendation but rather an attempt to display a range of choices available.

**For more information about purchasing:**
If employees believe that certain products would benefit them in their workplace, they should discuss the products with their supervisor or local safety and health committee. Supervisors can find more information about purchasing ergonomic products from their agency/facility purchasing or business office. Certain products may be available on OGS contract. Information for both of these resources can be found at [www.ogs.state.ny.us](http://www.ogs.state.ny.us), Commodity Contracts-Equipment, Industrial, and Commercial Supplies.
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Electric Can Opener

Photo courtesy of the Edlund Company. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Slide the cans to the opener - there’s no lifting of heavy cans with this convenient countertop model. Cans slide into position and lock right into place. This dual speed model will open most can sizes and shapes and its single handle operation makes it very easy to use.

MANUFACTURER

The Edlund Company • 1-800-772-2126
159 Industrial Parkway, Burlington, VT 05401

MFG. WEBSITE

www.edlundco.com
**PRODUCT DESCRIPTION**

Easi-Grip ergonomic kitchen knives and utensils are supremely comfortable for everyone to use, but will be particularly beneficial for those with arthritis, repetitive strain injury, carpal tunnel syndrome, or other conditions which weaken the hand and wrist.

**DISTRIBUTOR**

Mecanaids, Inc. • 1-800-227-0877
21 Hampden Drive, South Easton, MA 02375

**DIST. WEBSITE**

www.mecanaids.com/petauk.htm
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Back Saver Grip

Stout’s BackSaver Grip attaches to any long-handled tool to make work easier and relieve the back. It lessens the chance of back injuries and blisters. The back-saving grip allows the user to work in an upright position, rather than bent over. Use this ergonomically designed handle add-on with garden rakes, shovels, tree trimmers, paint extension poles, swimming pool skimmers, brooms, etc. This add-on grip attaches to virtually any long-handled tool to turn it into a back-saving ergonomic tool.

DISTRIBUTOR
MBS, Inc  •  1-800-752-7874
3511 West Green Tree Road , P.O. Box 090528 , Milwaukee, WI 53209

DIST. WEBSITE
www.mercantilebuyers.com
Product Description

The Long-Handled Heavy Duty Bulb Planter can be used for planting bulbs, vegetables, seedlings, and small shrubs. It can also be used to remove a core of soil to make easy access for plant food. The Long-Handled Bulb Planter has padded handle grips for comfort. The foot plate allows the operator to use his/her feet to push the planter into the soil, making the job easier.

Manufacturer

Life with Ease • 1-800-966-5119
P.O. Box 302, Newbury, NH 03255

Mfg. Website

www.lifewithease.com
Garden Tools

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Ergonomic hand tools by Radius maximize power and comfort while minimizing hand and wrist stress. They transfer energy from large muscles directly to the blades. The Natural Radius Grip (NRG) supports a wrist-neutral position.

MANUFACTURER

Radius Garden, LLC • 1-734-222-8044
P.O. Box 2506, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

MFG. WEBSITE

www.radiusgarden.com
Lawn and Shrub Rake

Photo courtesy of Life with Ease. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The Expandable Rake with Telescoping Handle is adaptable for both lawn and shrub work. Its light weight and telescoping handle helps users avoid back strain. The heat treated aluminum telescoping handle adjusts 35 to 69 inches. The rake head expands from 7 to 21 inches. This allows the user to do both lawn and shrubs with the same rake. Proper adjustment allows different people to use the same rake without strain.

MANUFACTURER

Life with Ease • 1-800-966-5119
P.O. Box 302, Newbury, NH 03255

MFG. WEBSITE

www.lifewithease.com
Multi Snip

Photo courtesy of Fiskars Brands, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The Softgrip® Multi Snip is compact, with a tough, strong Nyglass® composite body. It is comfortable and ready to cut almost anything. The cushion grip and ergonomic design help absorb pressure caused by squeezing, which increases comfort and reduces fatigue during repetitive use.

MANUFACTURER

Fiskars Brands, Inc • 1-608-259-1649
2537 Daniels Street, Madison, WI 53718

MFG. WEBSITE

www.fiskarsbrands.com
PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The Fiskars® PowerGear® ByPass Pruner provides power and comfort for any gardener. Its unique gear design maximizes leverage to reduce cutting effort, and the rotating handle minimizes strain and fatigue, especially during extended use.

MANUFACTURER

Fiskars Brands, Inc • 1-608-259-1649
2537 Daniels Street, Madison, WI 53718

MFG. WEBSITE

www.fiskarsbrands.com
Snow Shovel

Photo courtesy of Life with Ease. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The Back-Saver® Litening Snow Shovel is much lighter than the average shovel. It has an ergonomically designed contoured handle which ensures a more comfortable stance to prevent back strain. The contoured handle allows the user to bend less while shoveling.

MANUFACTURER

Life with Ease • 1-800-966-5119
P.O. Box 302, Newbury, NH 03255

MFG. WEBSITE

www.lifewithease.com
Utility Knife

Photo courtesy of Fiskars Brands, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

This ergonomically engineered utility knife is designed to fit the hand for maximum comfort. The PowerGrip® Utility Knife features a full loop handle that protects and stabilizes the hand on cutting surfaces. Designed with convenient swing-out blade storage and no-tool blade change, the PowerGrip® Utility Knife is easy to use.

MANUFACTURER

Fiskars Brands, Inc • 1-608-259-1649
2537 Daniels Street, Madison, WI 53718

MFG. WEBSITE

www.fiskarsbrands.com
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**Bed Mover**

*Photo courtesy of Dane Technologies. Reproduced with permission.*

**PRODUCT DESCRIPTION**

The Dane Bed Mover is a power-assist hospital bed cart that makes safe patient moving and handling secure. The Bed Mover allows a single staff person to move a heavily loaded bed with ease. The joystick steering is simple to use and easy to direct down crowded hallways. A person can safely move a loaded bed weighing over 1000 pounds.

**MANUFACTURER**

Dane Technologies • 1-888-544-7779
7105 Northland Terrace, Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

**MFG. WEBSITE**

www.danetechnologies.com
PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The ergonomic Elevated Bushel Trucks have handles sewn in on both ends, rust resistant coating, and a reinforced rim. The elevated truck allows the user to access the contents with minimal bending and back strain. Users can work in a comfortable position.

MANUFACTURER

BC Textile Innovations, Inc • 1-866-522-7671
312-1952 Kings Highway Avenue, Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 6C2

MFG. WEBSITE

www.textileinnovations.com
LAUNDRY AND HOUSEKEEPING

Cleaner

Photo courtesy of Umf Corp. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

This patented Perfect EasyGrip Ergonomic Handle can be used for both dry and damp mopping walls, windows, ceilings and floor. EasyGrip has been engineered to eliminate the “effort” from the cleaning process, weighing only 12 ounces. The EasyGrip ergonomic handle is adaptable to the user for a comfortable “personal fit” which also helps to get to those high and hard-to-reach places.

MANUFACTURER

PerfectClean, Umf Corporation • 1-847-920-0370
340 Ridge Road, Wilmette, IL 60091

MFG. WEBSITE

www.perfectclean.com
Electric Machine

Photo courtesy of Dane Technologies. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The Dane PowerPal 1000 is a compact electric machine powered by a 3/4 HP motor capable of generating 100 pounds of torque allowing it to push and pull up to 2,000 pounds. It can operate continuously for 10 hours on a single charge. The tiller handle is spring loaded to accommodate various height levels and will swing to an arc of 90 degrees. The PowerPal can turn 360 degrees within a circle radius of 5 feet forward or reverse.

MANUFACTURER

Dane Technologies • 1-888-544-7779
7105 Northland Terrace, Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

MFG. WEBSITE

www.danetechnologies.com
Flare Truck

Photo courtesy of Maxi-Movers, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The Flare Truck is ideal for the movement of bulky items. These trucks are specially designed for easy loading and unloading. The spring lift platform is ergonomically designed to bring the content level to the worker.

MANUFACTURER

Maxi-Movers, Inc • 1-800-275-2436
361 Neptune Avenue, West Babylon, New York 11704

MFG. WEBSITE

www.maxi-movers.com
Footwear Matting

Photo courtesy of Safety Seven Mfg., Inc. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

ErgoMates are mobile anti-fatigue matting that can be worn over footwear, like a sandal for footwear. ErgoMates provide all the benefits of anti-fatigue matting with the added benefits of mobility and slip resistance. ErgoMates reduce pain and fatigue experienced when standing or walking on hard surfaces for extended periods of time. Fully adjustable, ErgoMates strap onto almost any type of footwear.

MANUFACTURER

Safety Seven Manufacturing, Inc. • 1-866-849-4747
311 Main Street, N, Moose Jaw, SK, Canada, S6H 0W2

MFG. WEBSITE

www.ergosusa.com
Hamper

Photo courtesy of BC Textile Innovations, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

This 3-bushel capacity hamper swivels for easily transferring loads. Large solid tub holds large amounts of laundry, has a lid for total cleanliness with swivel action for dumping the load of laundry into a washer, dryer, or basket for folding and sorting. Standard 30 gallon poly bags can be used with this unit. Tub can be removed from the heavy duty tubular steel frame for complete cleaning.

MANUFACTURER

BC Textile Innovations, Inc • 1-866-522-7671
312-1952 Kings Highway Avenue, Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 6C2

MFG. WEBSITE

www.textileinnovations.com
Laundry Bag

Photo courtesy of BC Textile Innovations, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

This is an ergonomically designed laundry bag. The cone shape reduces the load amount to help reduce laundry related lifting injuries. Made from a 100% polyester spun fabric, these bags are very durable and colorfast. The bag has a handle at the bottom, one at the top and one on the side. The drawstrings close with a plastic B lock fastener.

MANUFACTURER

BC Textile Innovations, Inc • 1-866-522-7671
312-1952 Kings Highway Avenue, Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 6C2

MFG. WEBSITE

www.textileinnovations.com
Mop Bucket

Photo courtesy of Hesco, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

This is a 32-quart bucket which is taller than standard buckets, minimizing bending during wringing. This bucket has a removable partition for dividing the bucket into two parts — one for dirty water and one for cleaning solution. The bottomless side press wringer allows the user to rinse and wring the mop on the dirty water side, keeping the cleaning solution pure. It also includes a drainage plug for easier emptying.

DISTRIBUTOR

Hesco, Inc • 1-800-822-7467
6633 N. Milwaukee, Niles, IL 60714

DIST. WEBSITE

www.hescoinc.com
Roto Tilt Trucks

Photo courtesy of BC Textile Innovations, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

These trucks can be used for transporting small to heavy capacity loads in meeting laundry, housekeeping, maintenance, and material handling needs. The Roto Tilt Truck uses spring platform lifts to facilitate unloading in a safe and ergonomic manner.

MANUFACTURER

BC Textile Innovations, Inc • 1-866-522-7671
312-1952 Kings Highway Avenue, Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 6C2

MFG. WEBSITE

www.textileinnovations.com
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Desk Mover

Photo courtesy of Wesco Industrial Products, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

This desk mover can be used for relocating or cleaning desks and makes moving a fully loaded, double pedestal desk a one person job. By depressing the removable handle, the desk is lifted off the floor and secures the load with an internal safety latch. Four swivel rubber casters roll dolly smoothly. This desk mover has a 600-pound capacity and can be moved with or without the handle.

MANUFACTURER

Wesco Industrial Products, Inc. • 1-800-346-5511
P.O. Box 47, Lansdale, PA 19446

MFG. WEBSITE

www.wescomfg.com
Packaging Station

Photo courtesy of IAC Industries, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

This packaging station can be customized with accessories to fit packaging needs. The packaging bench comes in three sizes — 30 x 60 inches, 30 x 72 inches, and 36 x 72 inches. Work surfaces are laminated over industrial grade particle board to a full 1 1/4 inch thickness. The height of the bench is adjustable from 30 inches to 36 inches in 2 inch increments.

MANUFACTURER

IAC Industries, Inc. • 1-714-990-0557
895 Beacon Street, Brea, CA 92821

MFG. WEBSITE

www.iacindustries.com
Shelving

The Jarke High Density E-Z Glide Roll-Out Shelving has 100% full extension shelves. The shelving provides vertical access to extra heavy equipment and materials.

MANUFACTURER

Jarke Corporation • 1-800-722-5255
750 Pinecrest Drive, Prospect Heights, IL 60070

MFG. WEBSITE

www.jarke.com
Work Bench

Photo courtesy of Pucel Enterprises, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The Ergonomic Hydraulic Work Bench puts the work surface at the right height for back and fatigue saving productivity. Benches can be ordered with 8, 12 or 16 inch height adjustment. 1000 pound capacity for 8 and 12 inch adjustment and 750 pound capacity for 16 inch adjustment. Electric unit can adjust height with the push of a button.

MANUFACTURER

Pucel Enterprises, Inc. • 1-800-336-4986
1440 East 36th Street, Cleveland, OH 44114

MFG. WEBSITE

www.pucel-grizzly.com
End of Chapter for MAIL AND SUPPLY / SHIPPING AND RECEIVING
NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training (Partnership)
www.nyscseapartnership.org
The education and training programs provided by the Partnership for CSEA-represented New York State employees include programs for the promotion of increased workplace safety and health. From the navigation bar at the left side of the Partnership’s home page, select Safety and Health for information about the implementation of safety and health regulations and maintenance of safe work environments; articles on safety and health topics; and meeting minutes of the NYS Statewide Safety and Health Committee.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
www.osha.gov
OSHA is part of the U.S. Department of Labor. OSHA aims to ensure worker safety and health in the United States by working with employers and employees to create better working environments. Information on ergonomics can be found by using the website’s Search feature or Site Index.

Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare (OHSAH)
www.ohsah.bc.ca
OHSAH in British Columbia, Canada, has expertise in a wide range of health and safety areas, including ergonomics. Click on Programs, then select Ergonomics to find information on Current Initiatives, Completed Projects, Tips & Tools, and publications.

Washington State Department of Labor and Industries
www.lni.wa.gov
To find information on ergonomics go to Worker Links, click on Learn about Workplace Safety Requirements, then [in the left margin] click on Hazard Prevention, and select Ergonomics. The section on “Success with Ergonomics” presents several projects and stories that describe useful ergonomic interventions.

Lifewitthease
www.lifewitthease.com
Life with Ease is an interactive Internet store that specializes in products to help individuals prevent injuries and maximize their functionality at work and at home. Staff are available by email and toll-free telephone service to answer questions, help solve problems, and take customer suggestions on developing product lines.
The NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation in employment, admission, or access to its programs or activities. Reasonable accommodation will be provided on request.

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