CrewSigned

Ergonomics Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

Not every injury comes from a single moment. Some build up slowly, day after day, until one morning your back, shoulder, wrist or knee will not cooperate. These are called musculoskeletal disorders, and they are some of the most common and costly injuries in our trade. Ergonomics is about fitting the job to the person so the work does not wear you out.

There are three main things that wear the body down. The first is awkward posture: working overhead, kneeling, bending at the waist, twisting, or reaching far from your body. The second is force: lifting, pushing, pulling, gripping hard or using vibrating tools. The third is repetition: doing the same motion over and over without a break. When two or three of these show up together, the risk goes up fast.

Look for ways to work in a neutral position, where your back is straight, your elbows are close to your sides and your wrists are straight. Raise the work instead of bending over it. Put materials on a bench, a sawhorse or a cart at waist height. Use extension handles and poles so you do not have to reach or bend so much. For work at floor level, use knee pads or a stool. For overhead work, use a platform or a lift to bring the work closer.

Let tools do the work. Use carts, dollies and hoists to move heavy things. Pick tools with good grips that fit your hand, keep blades and bits sharp so you do not have to push as hard, and use anti-vibration gloves or tools where you can.

Change it up. Rotate tasks when you can, take short breaks to stretch, and switch hands or positions. Even a minute of moving differently gives your muscles a chance to recover.

Pay attention to early warning signs: aching, numbness, tingling, stiffness or pain that does not go away overnight. Report it early. A small problem caught early is much easier to fix than a damaged joint or a surgery.

If you have an idea to make a task easier on your body, tell me. Often the people doing the work know the best fix.

Discussion questions

1. Which task on this job leaves you the most sore at the end of the day?
2. What tool, cart or setup change would make that task easier on your body?
3. What early signs of strain should you report, and who do you tell?

OSHA standard

OSHA Ergonomics guidance
https://www.osha.gov/ergonomics

SOURCES
Simple Solutions, Ergonomics for Construction Workers (NIOSH 2007-122): https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/publications/numbered/2007-122.html
NIOSH, About Ergonomics and Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders: https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/ergonomics/about/index.html
OSHA Safety and Health Topics, Ergonomics: https://www.osha.gov/ergonomics

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC
Ergonomics Toolbox Talk

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JOB / SITE

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TIME

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