

## **ERGONOMICS: AWKWARD POSTURE**

Awkward posture refers to positions of the body that deviate significantly from the neutral position while performing work activities. When you are in an awkward posture, muscles operate less efficiently and you expend more force to complete the task.

Examples of awkward postures are twisting, bending, reaching, pulling or lifting. Other examples of awkward postures are working with your hands above your head, your elbows above your shoulders, working with your neck or back bent more than 30 degrees without support and without the ability to vary posture.

### **Preventive Measures and Controls**

- Be aware of your posture. Good posture maintains the natural curve of your spine and includes relaxed shoulders that are held slightly back and level, ears in line with your shoulders, chin tucked slightly inward and pelvis shifted forward to allow the hips to align with the ankles.
- Sit close to your work and keep frequently used materials within reach.
- Maintain neutral wrist/arm postures as much as possible.
- Avoid twisting and bending motions. These types of movements can put pressure on your spine's discs.
- Use both hands instead of one to lift or complete tasks.
- Respect your discomfort or pain. Change positions, stretch to ease stiff muscles, take a short break or change tasks.

Standing or sitting in the same position for an extended period of time is a common cause of back, neck and leg pain. Awkward posture often stresses the spine and causes muscle fatigue and pain. A few minutes of walking or stretching will increase circulation and help you feel better and be more productive.