

**Program Management Office  
Safety Bulletin for August 2019**

## Take it Easy – Your Body will Thank You



- Whether it happens at work or on the golf course, overexertion continues to be a leading cause of injury over all age groups. It was the second leading reason ([after falls](#)) that adults age 25-64 ended up in emergency departments in 2013, and the third leading cause for kids ages 10 and older, often from too-heavy [backpacks](#), computers and gaming, and poor posture.
- Overexertion causes 35% of all work-related injuries and is, by far, the largest contributor to workers' compensation costs – more than \$15 billion, or 25% of the total cost in 2012, according to Injury Facts 2016®. It also is the #1 reason for lost work days. More than 322,00 people missed work that year due to overexertion. Here are some injury statistics by industry for 2014:

- Transportation and warehousing – 38,960
- Professional and business services – 23,410
- Education and health services – 68,720
- Government – 72,050

- Construction – 19,070
- Manufacturing – 46,040
- Wholesale trade – 21,100
- Retail trade – 42,720

Over all age groups, whether work-related or off-the-job, hospitals treated 3,132,271 overexertion-related injuries in 2014, and the trend doesn't seem to be going downward. What gives?

## It's Really About Ergonomics

Ergonomic injuries are disorders of the soft tissue, specifically of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, blood vessels and spinal discs caused by:

- Excessive [lifting](#), lowering, pushing, pulling, reaching or stretching
- Repetitive motion
- Working in awkward positions
- Sitting or standing for prolonged period of time
- Using excessive force
- Vibration, resting on sharp corners or edges
- Temperature extremes

Whether you become injured on an assembly line or typing on a computer, playing video games or helping someone move, it's important to know the signs. Ergonomic injury is cumulative. Symptoms can include everything from posture problems and intermittent discomfort, to tendonitis, chronic pain and disability.

## Overexertion can be Prevented

Regular exercise, stretching and strength training to maintain a strong core all are beneficial in preventing injury. Following are some additional tips for work and home:

- [Plan a lift](#) before you begin, keep your back straight and lift with your legs
- Limit the amount of time you spend doing the same motion over and over
- Take frequent breaks from any sustained position every 20-30 minutes
- [If you work at a desk](#), move frequently used items close to you, use a footrest and adjust the height of your computer
- Report pain, swelling, numbness, tingling, tenderness, clicking or loss of strength to your doctor before it becomes a full-blown injury