

## What makes an effective ergonomics program?

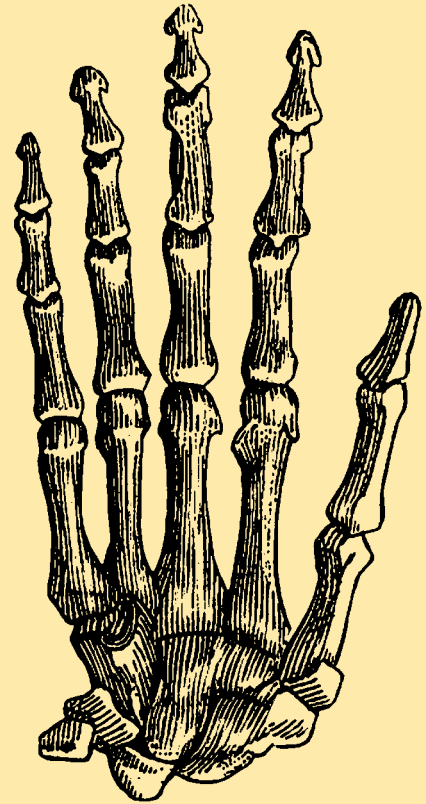
- Worksite analysis to determine ergonomic hazards and job functions that are high risk.
- Engineering controls, such as the design or redesign of the job environment and procedures.
- Administrative controls, including job rotation, rest periods, and decreasing the number of repetitions per worker.
- Medical management, including taking past work illness and injury histories, monitoring work situations and providing educational materials and seminars on leading a healthy lifestyle, such as proper nutrition, adequate rest, regular exercise and stress relief, and the role these have in reducing injuries.
- Training and education on job procedures; causes, risk factors and symptoms of cumulative trauma disorders, and the health effect of exposure; and reporting procedures at all levels.
- Personal protective equipment, such as back and wrist supports, used as a supplement to engineering and administrative controls.

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## SELECTING THE PROPER



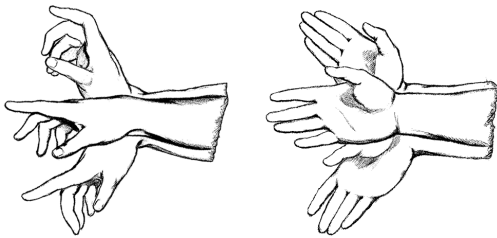
# WRIST

# s u p p o r t

# Proper Wrist Support Selection

Supplementing an ergonomics program with wrist supports can be an important step toward helping reduce the stress and pain associated with repetitive motions of the wrists. Selecting the proper wrist support is even more important to obtain essential support and comfort without compromising dexterity, flexibility or productivity.

It's estimated people may flex their wrists as much as 5,000 times in the course of a normal workday. The repetitive downward and upward, and side to side motions, the wrists endure can result in sprains and strains. Over time this may result in more serious injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome and tendinitis. A well-designed flexible wrist support should add comfort and support without restricting normal range of motion, finger dexterity or productivity.



## What a wrist support can do

- Wrist supports are an excellent cost-effective supplement to help reduce wrist pain and help control injury.
- Wrist supports provide support and comfort and help limit wrist flexion (downward movements) to encourage neutral posture while allowing some freedom of movement to complete a task efficiently and comfortably. Some models may help limit wrist flexion and extension to provide additional support when performing downward and upward wrist movements.
- Wrist supports have a positive role in those situations where the risk of injury cannot be readily engineered out of a job or where supplement support is required.

## What a wrist support can't do

- Wrist supports will not compensate for poor workstation design and proper rest breaks.
- Wrist supports will not prevent wrist injury. They are supplemental control measure to help maintain neutral wrist posture. Controlling risk factors helps reduce the incidence rate. Wrist supports should be used with other control measures.
- Wrist supports will not substitute an effective ergonomics program. They are a supplemental part of a comprehensive ergonomics program, which includes job task analysis, ergonomic design, medical surveillance, training and education and the use of personal protective equipment.

## How to select the proper wrist support

- Check for flexible support that limits flexion and/or extension. Some models feature flexible spiral stays providing firm support. Others may have an open-center stay that is designed to provide support and reduce pressure on the median nerve for added comfort.
- Check for a design with an adjustable closure so the support can be tightened or loosened to ensure a snug but comfortable fit. Avoid excessive bulk that may restrict movement.
- Check for a design that provides needed support and materials suited to the job task. Some models feature durable materials to withstand daily use in tougher jobs. Workers at risk to strain and injury due to lighter duty repetitive activities and static positions may benefit from supports made with lightweight materials and have a more compact design.
- Check for a flexible support product versus rigid support. Flexible supports allow some range of motion to complete tasks comfortably and efficiently. Rigid splints, commonly prescribed by medical doctors, are designed to completely restrict any movement to encourage healing.
- Check to make sure the materials are breathable and machine washable. Some models even may have interior ventilation holes to promote air flow to help keep the hands dry. Inferior materials can be too hot and uncomfortable to wear.
- Check the material specifications for overall durability. Inferior hook-and-loop closures, elastic bands and other critical components will breakdown, reducing function, and increase long-term costs.
- Check the manufacturers experience, reputation, resources and product line. Make sure they can provide proper training and support with your ergonomics programs.