



## ERGONOMICS

**Ergonomics** is the science of designing the job, equipment, and workplace to fit the worker. Proper ergonomic design is necessary to prevent repetitive strain injuries, which can develop over time and can lead to long-term disability.



The International Ergonomics Association defines ergonomics as follows:

Ergonomics (or human factors) is the scientific discipline concerned with the understanding of interactions among humans and other elements of a system, and the profession that applies theory, principles, data and methods to design in order to optimize human well-being and overall system performance.

Ergonomics is employed to fulfill the two goals of health and productivity. It is relevant in the design of such things as safe furniture and easy-to-use interfaces to machines.



### Ergonomics in the workplace

Ergonomics in the workplace has to do largely with the safety of employees, both long and short-term. Ergonomics can help reduce costs by improving safety. This would decrease the money paid out in workers' compensation. For example, over five million workers sustain overextension injuries per year. Through ergonomics, workplaces can be designed so that workers do not have to overextend themselves.

Workplaces may either take the reactive or proactive approach when applying ergonomics practices. Reactive ergonomics is when something needs to be fixed, and corrective action is taken. Proactive ergonomics is the process of seeking areas that could be improved and fixing the issues before they become a large problem. Problems may be fixed through equipment design, task design, or environmental design. Equipment design changes the actual, physical devices used by people. Task design changes what people do with the equipment. Environmental design changes the environment in which people work, but not the physical equipment they use.

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