

# NIPISSING

U N I V E R S I T Y

Ergonomics and  
Musculoskeletal Disorder  
Prevention Program

## INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the ergonomic and musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) prevention program is to enhance employee health, safety and well-being and to promote physical health by minimizing occupational risk factors associated with MSD's. This is achieved by:

- Ergonomic training
- Minimizing exposure to risk factors for MSD injuries
- Ergonomic assessments
- Implementations of ergonomic control strategies

## SCOPE

This program applies to all employees of Nipissing University.

This program encompasses all employees whose job functions have the potential for work related injuries. Certain aspects of job tasks and work environments contain risk factors that may contribute to injury. Through proper ergonomic assessment, potential injuries may be reduced, prevented, and even eliminated.

## DEFINITIONS

**Ergonomics:** A scientific discipline concerned with the interaction between humans and other elements of a system, and the profession that applies theory, principles, data and methods of design in order to enhance human well-being and optimise overall system performance (CSA – Z412-17)

**Risk Factors:** Factors regarding a job or the way the job is performed that increase the risk of an employee developing an MSD.

**Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD):** Injuries and disorders of the musculoskeletal system (the muscles, tendons, nerves, bones, ligaments) that can be caused or aggravated by various hazards or risk factors in the workplace.

**Static Posture:** The condition of staying in the same posture or position for long periods of time. This causes muscle aches and discomfort due to the lack of movement which impedes them from appropriate blood flow.

**Neutral Posture:** Body/joint positions in which the muscles, tendons, and joint function optimally and are most relaxed.

**Force:** Force is generated through muscular efforts during lifting, pushing, pulling, and carrying tasks

**Individual and Environmental factors:** Factors such as age, individual tissue tolerance, pre-existing conditions, etc. will affect the likelihood of developing MSD. Environmental factors such as working in cold or hot environments, vibrations, lighting etc. can also have an influence on MSD incidents.

**Ergonomic Assessments:** A review of the employees' workstation set-up and job duties, an observation of the employees' work practices and a review of health concerns to identify risk factors of MSD.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Supervisor/Management:

- Participate in ergonomic training sessions and be familiar with the basic principles of workplace ergonomics, MSD signs and symptoms and risk factors;
- Communicate this program to employees within their faculty/department;
- Encourage the involvement and participation of employee in good ergonomic processes associated with their work;
- Identify and manage potential ergonomic hazards in the workplace by establishing ergonomic work practices aligned with this program;
- Identify training needs and coordinate training for employees via the Manager, Health and Wellness;
- Request the assistance of the Manager, Health and Wellness for ergonomic requirements as necessary;

### Employees:

- Participate in ergonomic training sessions provided on MSD prevention, risk factors recognition and ergonomics to improve their work practices;
- To work in accordance with proper ergonomic practices;
- Apply ergonomic principles as per this program to their workspace and/or work processes;
- Inform supervisor/manager upon requesting an ergonomic assessment of their workstation/environment;

## COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING

The ergonomic and musculoskeletal disorder prevention program is available on Nipissing University's Human Resources website: [XXXX LINK](#)

All new hires will be required to review this program upon commencing their employment with Nipissing University.

At the launch of this programs all department heads will be contacted by the Manager, Health and Wellness to discuss ergonomic training sessions. All new hires will be required to complete the ergonomic training sessions within three (3) months of starting their employment with Nipissing University.

The ergonomic training sessions will discuss the following:

- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Stretches and exercises for the office
- Office ergonomics
- Manual material handling and back care
- Importance of microbreaks
- How to request ergonomic services

Please note that the Manager, Health and Wellness will tailor the training sessions based on the needs of the individual departments.

## ERGONOMIC ASSESSMENTS AND PROCEDURES

For employees who do not have a workstation/office, the assessment consists of a review of the employees work environment and job duties, an observation of the employees' work practices and a review of health concerns to identify risk factors of MSD.

During the assessment, recommendations to improve the workstation/work environment and reduce risk factors will be provided (taking into consideration the employees' duties and health issues).

Following the ergonomic assessment, should ergonomic devices or equipment be required, they must be supported with medical documentation and are subjected to approval. Ergonomic devices will be provided from current ergonomic inventory (based on availability) and/or purchased from an ergonomic supplier. The brand of product is at the discretion of the university and based on availability and medical recommendations.

An ergonomic assessment is considered a preventative tool and therefore can be requested at anytime and MSD do not have to be present in order to request an assessment. Please note that seeing as Supervisors/Managers are responsible for the Health and Safety of their employees; employees should notify their Supervisors/Managers of their request for an ergonomic assessment.

**Procedures to Request Ergonomic Assessment:** Employees can request an ergonomic assessment by completing the request form found at this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/r1Lp2z7YNU>

Prior to the assessment, employees will need to complete the '*Workers Discomfort Self Assessment*' and provide a current medical note from their treating physician/practitioner requesting the ergonomic assessment.

### FAQ

1. **Will I automatically receive ergonomic devices?** No, during the ergonomic assessment recommendations will be made to improve your workstation. If ergonomic devices are required, they need to be supported by medical documentation that outlines what is required and are subject to approval.
2. **How long does an ergonomic assessment take?** Each employee, workstation and assessment are unique and therefore some assessments take longer than others. Employees should allow for up to 45 minutes for their assessment.
3. **I have a flexible work arrangement; can I have an ergonomic assessment for my home workstation?** Yes, while not as effective as in-person assessments, virtual assessments can be requested. Please note that should ergonomic devices be required for employees who have a flexible work arrangement, the university will provide one (1) device. It's at the employee's discretion if they wish to have the device at home or on campus.

## PROGRAM REVIEW

The ergonomic and musculoskeletal disorder prevention program will be reviewed every two (2) years by the Manager, Health and Wellness in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

This program integrates requirements established by:

- The Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario (OHSA)
- Canadian Standards Association (CSA)
- The Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety