



MAKE A FRESH CHOICE

Across the country, a significant number of workplace injuries among Kaiser Permanente staff are caused by lifting, pushing and pulling.

And a good part of those injuries happen to medical/surgical employees in acute care. Strains, sprains and contusions account for more than one-half of all injuries in some regions. Ouch.

Now there's a better way. Working through our Labor Management Partnership, we've discovered ways to limit the amount of injuries on the job.

A fresh choice that more and more medical/surgical employees are opting for to stay safe on the job:

- Request an ergonomic assessment from your supervisor of the department's work area, common tasks and equipment. Use the findings in your safety plan
- Provide annual ergonomics training for staff
- Conduct annual safety training for staff on equipment and procedures
- Work in pairs when handling patients
- Ask stewards and supervisors to conduct on-the-spot body mechanics checks
- Use proper equipment for patient transfers
- Use team lift for high-risk patients
- Train nursing staff and care partners to assist lift teams
- Use lift teams to train staff on proper lift technique
- Make sure lift equipment is easy to access
- Start a rating system for patients and update daily
- Ask for help.

The best way of stopping workplace injuries is to work together in Labor Management Partnership.

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www.lmpartnership.org



WELL, WELL, WELL

While pharmacy employees dispense wellness to Kaiser Permanente members every day, they face a workplace where sprains and strains to the hand, wrist, thumb and back are all too common.

Working through our Labor Management Partnership, we've found ways to drive down injuries and establish wellness for pharmacy employees in outpatient pharmacies:

- Make sure supplies you use most often are in a convenient location
- Rotate job tasks
- Adjust work stations before and during shifts
- Use custom-cut, anti-fatigue mats
- Reduce over-the-counter reach
- Take 2-3 minute ergonomic exercise breaks every 30-60 minutes
- Use ergonomically safe carts to transport heavy and bulky items
- Request annual training on safe ways to handle materials
- Use adjustable height work surfaces, chairs and monitors
- Get rid of overhead storage
- Keep area free of clutter.

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DON'T SETTLE

FOR PAINS AND STRAINS AND SPRAINS

Pains and strains and sprains don't have to be the lot of radiology employees who too often experience strains to the lower back and other body parts -- including shoulders, wrists and fingers.

Working through our Labor Management Partnership, we've found ways to improve workplace safety and drive down injuries for radiology employees:

- Request body mechanics training for imaging tasks
- Make sure you have adequate lighting in x-ray rooms
- Do stretch exercises three times per shift
- Get training on using lift equipment
- Make sure lift equipment is working and available
- Check on better ways to handle and store files
- Secure fraying carpets
- Use stepladders and non-slip foot stools
- Use custom-cut, anti-fatigue mats
- Secure furniture and fixtures
- Make sure equipment is free of sharp edges
- Report and repair faulty equipment
- Examine equipment cords and plugs for current inspection sticker
- Make sure medical equipment you use displays current bio-med check sticker.

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LIFTING, BENDING, PUSHING, PULLING

SAVE IT FOR THE GYM

If you're an EVS worker, you know the drill. The pushing, pulling, lifting, bending it seems to take to get the job done. The sprains, the strains, the back pain.

There's a better way to finish the job.

Working through our Labor Management Partnership, we've found better ways of doing things to eliminate injuries among EVS staff:

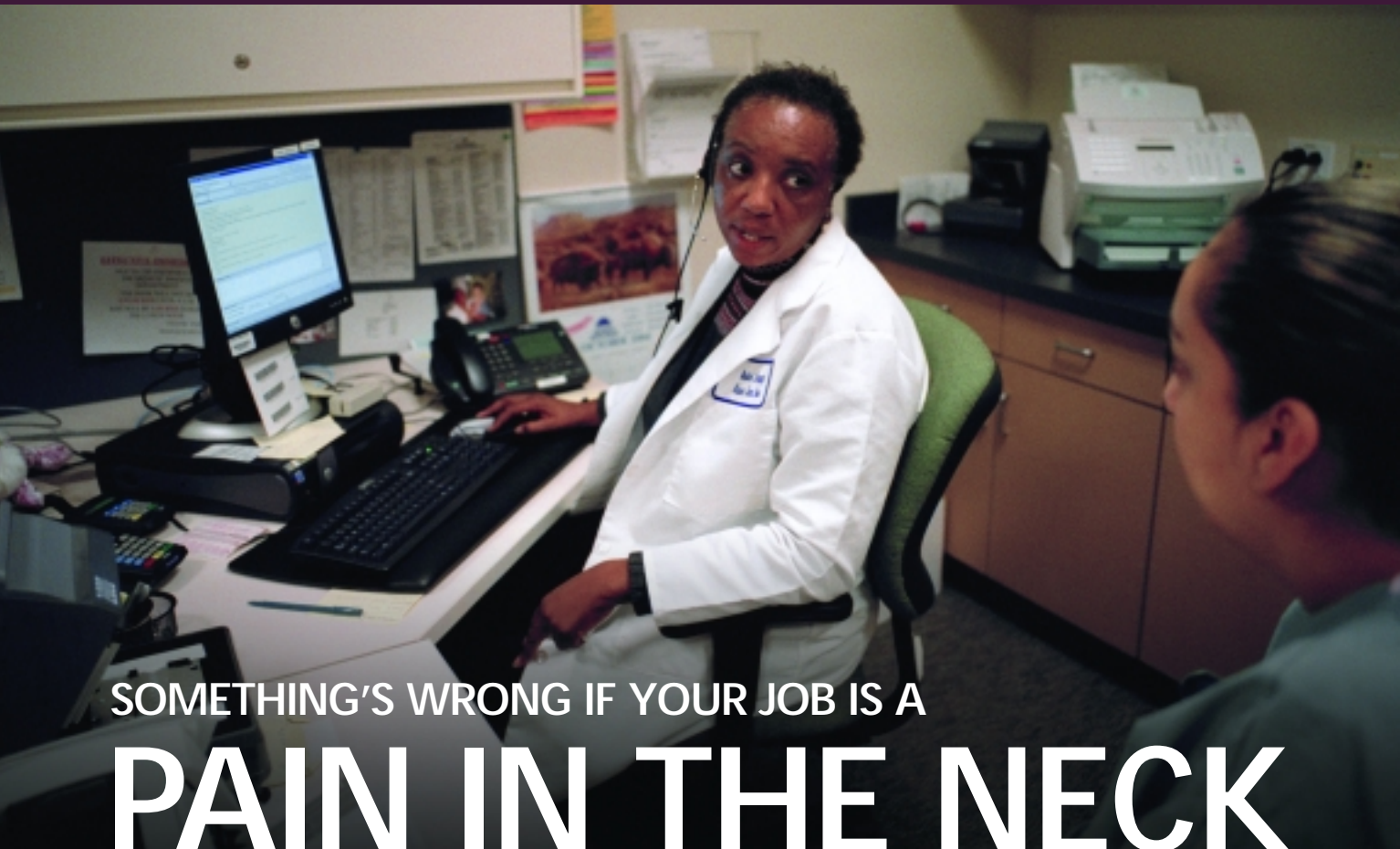
- Get an ergonomic assessment of your job
- Get annual training in ergonomics, with emphasis on lifting, pushing and pulling
- Do stretching exercises in a group led by supervisors and stewards before and after each shift
- Use microfiber mops
- Use smaller carts to distribute linens
- Use wheeled conference room tables
- Make sure trash compactors feed directly into waste collection
- Work in teams of three to turn around patients' rooms
- Use job rotation
- Encourage all KP staff to separate liquid from the trash
- Use smaller linen bags on the units
- Ask for help.

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SOMETHING'S WRONG IF YOUR JOB IS A
PAIN IN THE NECK

If your job is a pain in the neck or wrist, lower back, shoulder, hand or elbow, there's something wrong.

It's called cumulative injury or strain, and appointment services employees are at high risk for these kinds of injuries.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Now, there's a better way to perform your job.

Working through our Labor Management Partnership we've discovered safer ways to complete your work. Try this:

- Get training about how to adjust your chair, workstation and about other safe work practices
- Ask for ergonomically correct equipment
- Take stretching breaks led by stewards and managers
- Help orient new employees to safe work practices and equipment.

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Chart room employees



CHART US SAFER

In the past, chart room workers have suffered skyrocketing injuries from strains and sprains in their shoulders, backs, wrists, hands and feet. But because of collaborative efforts to improve workplace safety, chart room workers have achieved safer workplaces this year. And it's showing up in reduced injuries.

Working through our Labor Management Partnership, we've found ways to improve workplace safety:

- Do stretching exercises led by supervisors and stewards three times per shift
- Use carts designed for waist-up use
- Use custom-cut, anti-fatigue mats
- Use anti-skid paint in transport trucks to prevent slipping
- Maintain list of expired charts and ship to offsite location
- Don't use bottom or two top shelves
- Make sure you have adequate cart space for proper movement
- Work in pairs when loading or unloading
- Use hydraulic lift when loading and unloading.

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Emergency department employees



SLOW DOWN YOU'RE MOVING TOO FAST

Haste can save lives, but it can also result in increased injuries among emergency department staff who suffer some of the highest injuries in their workplaces – including strains, sprains and contusions to the lower back, upper extremities, shoulders, knees, upper backs and ankles.

Working through our Labor Management Partnership, we've found ways to improve workplace safety and reduce injuries for emergency department employees:

- Use team lift, lift equipment, proper patient lift technique in all patient handling
- Use "two-person" policy for patient handling
- Take 2-3 minute ergonomic exercise breaks every 30-60 minutes
- Develop an emergency department-customized sharps management program for correct handling and disposal of sharps
- Make sure you have adequate room for all tasks
- Configure work area to match work flow
- Get body mechanics training that is customized for the emergency department
- Request an ergonomics assessment from your supervisor of the work area, common tasks and equipment
- Get annual ergonomics training for all staff
- Partnering with EVS staff, develop policies and procedures for disposal of trash
- Implement a "work at a safe pace" policy
- Develop stress release program
- Get all emergency department staff trained in appropriate use of gurneys
- Assure a latex-free environment.

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SAFETY AT WORK

Pathology and laboratory workers experience one of the highest injury rates among staff at Kaiser Permanente. But one of the ways they can reduce injuries is by practicing safety at work:

- Conduct an ergonomic assessment of the department's work area, common tasks and equipment
- Get annual ergonomics/body mechanics training for staff
- Get annual safety training or a review on equipment and procedures
- Make sure personal protection equipment policies and procedures are enforced
- Rotate job functions when possible
- Ensure ergonomically suitable handling of specimens
- Conduct ergonomic review of all equipment before purchasing
- Have managers and stewards lead 2-3 minute ergonomic exercise breaks every 30-60 minutes
- Conduct thorough training on all new equipment
- Purchase automatic or semi-automatic scientific equipment such as pedal-driven pipette machines, automatic cap piercing, etc ...
- Require height-adjustable work surfaces, chairs, monitors
- Install pedal adjustable feature or large knobs on microscopes
- Configure work area to match work flow

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