

SMOHIT Body Maintenance
Toolbox Talks for the Sheet Metal Industry

Sustained (Awkward) Postures

- Sustained (awkward) postures can be caused by tasks such as twisting, reaching, and bending; and remaining in the same posture for long periods of time.
- Ergonomically sound methods to counter sustained (awkward) postures include:
 - Repositioning your body to a more neutral posture.
 - Selecting tools that reduce awkward postures.
 - Using an adjustable work surface.
 - Moving closer to your work.
 - Using energy absorbing floor mats.
- Many back injuries are caused by lifting, twisting, bending, or stretching.
- You put stress on your body when you:
 - Bend sideways or twist your trunk.
 - Reach upward (which causes you to arch your back).
 - Apply force with your arms out in front of you.
 - Carry material on one shoulder or hip.
- A neutral body position is the most comfortable working posture.
 - This is when your shoulders are down and relaxed, your arms are close to your sides, your elbows are bent, and your wrists and hands are straight.
- When your body is “out of neutral,” you increase the stress on your joints, muscles, tendons, nerves, and blood vessels.

Notes:

Instructor Tips

- **Explain that other methods for reducing negative effects of sustained (awkward) postures include taking “micro-breaks” and splitting up your work.**
 - **Splitting up your work means that if you are kneeling or bending for long periods of time, switch to another task to rest your back and knees.**
- **Ask workers to discuss which methods listed in the second bullet, they use.**

Jobsite: _____
Supervisor: _____

Date: _____
G.C. _____

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Ergonomics (4)