



**THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY**
WASHINGTON, DC

Responsible University Official: Senior Associate Vice President for Safety and Security

Responsible Office: Division of Safety and Security

Last Revised Date: March 17, 2017

ERGONOMICS

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the George Washington University to improve the comfort and well-being of employees by identifying and correcting ergonomic risk factors in the workplace. The university’s Ergonomic Program was developed to effectively identify and prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders through engineering, equipment, proper work practices, and administrative controls.

Reason for Policy

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) can result when there is a mismatch between the physical capacity of workers and their equipment and the physical demands of their job. Ergonomics can provide a solution to many of these injuries.

Who is Governed by this Policy

Faculty and staff

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Policy

Proper application of ergonomic principles can help to reduce the risk of injuries or illnesses for employees working with computers, in laboratories, or in jobs involving repetitive motions and handling of heavy materials.

The university’s Ergonomic Program promotes employee health and comfort through training, consultation, and written recommendations.

The primary tools of the university’s Ergonomic Program include training and information, and workstation evaluations and recommendations. Employees seeking information on ergonomics should contact Health & Emergency Management Services to request an ergonomic assessment or more information.

Employees may request an in-person ergonomic assessment of their workstation by contacting Health & Emergency Management Services: safety@gwu.edu. No evaluations will be performed without the knowledge of the employee’s immediate supervisor.

The Ergonomic assessment contractor will provide written recommendations to the employee, as well as his or her supervisor, which will outline possible alterations to the workstation. The purpose of the evaluation and written report are to eliminate ergonomic problems that may lead to musculoskeletal disorders, and to address MSDs already present. Only employees experiencing ergonomic difficulties should request an evaluation.

The written report provided by The Ergonomic assessment contractor may include but are not limited to suggested products, such as keyboard trays or ergonomically designed chairs. Purchasing suggested products is both the decision and responsibility of the evaluated employee’s department.

This policy supports the procedures set forth by the university’s Ergonomic Program, available from Health & Emergency Management Services.

Definitions

Ergonomics

Fitting the workplace to the worker, and examining the interaction between the worker and his or her environment.

Musculoskeletal Disorder

A disorder of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, blood vessels, or spinal discs, usually as a result of repetitive motion that places inordinate strain on the body.

Related Information

[OSHA: Ergonomics Guidelines](#)

Contacts

Contact	Telephone	Email
Health & Emergency Management Services	(202) 994-4347	safety@gwu.edu

Document History

- **Last Reviewed Date:** March 17, 2017
 - **Last Revised Date:** March 17, 2017
 - **Policy Origination Date:** September 30, 2002
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Who Approved This Policy

Louis H. Katz, Executive Vice President and Treasurer
Beth Nolan, Senior Vice President and General Counsel

This policy, as well as all [university policies](#), are located on the [Office of Compliance and Privacy's](#) home page.