



## Ergonomics in Dental Practices

Ergonomics is the practice of maximizing workplace efficiency while reducing employee discomfort. It largely involves maintaining ideal posture, movement and positioning during your workday to improve comfort and avoid injuries while remaining productive. It can also refer to considerations for the design of a workplace to accommodate your working conditions.

Read on for more information on the impacts of poor ergonomics and tips on improving them.

### Impacts of Poor Ergonomics

Poor ergonomics in a dental setting can have several negative effects on your body and your work, including:

- Physical pain, including neck pain, back pain and headaches
- Poor posture
- Muscle weakness, tendon inflammation and musculoskeletal disorders
- Eye strain
- Decreased productivity
- Lower morale and other mental health issues

### Tips for Improving Ergonomics

The following tips can help improve ergonomics in your dental work setting:

- Use tools that lower physical strain while still allowing for functionality.
- Alternate tools with differing diameters and weights if you pinch-grip them and consider using tools with silicone instrument handles.
- Properly position the patient.
- Do not remain in one position for too long and move throughout the day.
- Take breaks to ensure you are not overexerting yourself.
- Use properly fitting gloves for optimal grip and dexterity and correctly sized personal protective equipment that does not impair vision or increase fatigue.
- Ensure proper lighting is utilized and set up appropriately to prevent awkward examination postures.
- Maintain proper posture and sit upright with your spine in its natural position.
- Choose chairs and stools that have features that improve ergonomics.
- Stretch and exercise regularly.
- Breathe through your nose and use a relaxed breathing style when wearing a mask.
- Ensure optimal distance from your eyes to the patient's mouth that allows for good posture, focus and clear vision when using loupes.

## Conclusion

By taking steps to improve ergonomics at work, you can reduce your risk of injuries and improve your overall health and well-being.

Reach out to your supervisor for additional safety guidance.