Hello,

It’s that time again for our annual 2016 spring meeting for the North Carolina Association for Hospital Central Service Professionals. Please join us for a very well planned seminar from dates April 20th through April 22nd. Our special theme for this year will be “SPD Under the Microscope”. In this particular meeting we will be providing a lot of information on how SPD is being examined, so please be sure to make plans to join us. We have three special board members who will no longer be with us, Judith Carey, Ann Murdock, and Patricia Galmon. It has been a wonderful experience working with these amazing women and I wish them all much success in their future. I would also like to take the time out to recognize all of our vendors for their hard work and dedication that they’ve provided for NCAHCSP. I would like to wish you all well.

Sincerely,

Ann Thomas
President

President’s Message

First a howling blizzard woke us,
Then the rain came down to soak us,
And now before the eye can focus —
Crocus. ~Lilja Rogers
Objectives:
- Define the term ergonomics.
- Discuss what it means to use proper versus improper body mechanics.
- Discuss the statistics of injury associated with the non-use of proper body mechanics.
- Discuss techniques healthcare workers can use in various settings to prevent prolonged injuries.
- Discuss spinal injuries associated with improper ergonomics

You are exhausted! This whole week has been spent standing on your feet for 8-12 hours, meeting deadlines, and exceeding vigorous expectations. Your favorite reality television show, soap opera, or drama series finds itself watching you most of the time when you get in from working those extended days, evenings, or nights. As efficient and diligent you find yourself working within the areas of decontamination, sterilization, sterile storage, distribution, or preparation and packaging; you have found yourself in a physically decomposed predicament. Are you using the appropriate body mechanics?

What is ergonomics?
When people envision the term ergonomics, they often get an image of a secretary sitting at a technical work station, slouched down in his or her chair, typing away. Ergonomics, however, can be associated with all professionals, not just your typical office personnel.
As coined by OSHA, the science used to fit the job to the worker defines ergonomics (Chobin, 2013). For instance, it would be unrealistic and unsafe to ask a healthcare worker to lift a 400 pound individual without any healthcare equipment to make that particular job easier on the worker. Sterile processing technicians have a physically demanding job. In sterile processing, it may be precarious for the worker to attempt to perform specific tasks on the job that involve them overreaching, pulling and pushing heavy items excessively. Trauma can occur when the appropriate ergonomics is not used. Technicians are at risk when they excessively reach for sterilized items being sorted, attempt to reach for items on higher shelves above shoulder level, push and pull heavy carts repetitively, and stand in one position while sorting instrumentation, while they rest their wrists on hard counter tops (Chobin, 2013). Ergonomics redefined can be stated as utilizing the appropriate posture, body mechanics, equipment, and resources in order to avoid injuries while performing a job.

**What is improper body mechanics?**
Everything starting at an individual’s posture, to the way they stand, walk, bend, reach, push, pull, sleep, and sit should be done utilizing appropriate body mechanics. Improper body mechanics results when the lifting capacity has exceeded the individual’s lifting ability, reasonable limits of forces exerted on the musculoskeletal system have been beyond reason, and furthermore, when the weaker muscles of the arms and shoulders are utilized more frequently for lifting, rather than the stronger muscles of that individual’s legs (Beecher & Wheeler-Vickery, 2008). Additional factors that can contribute to improper body mechanics and injury include some of the following:

Lack of training
Lack of equipment training
Fatigue at the end of a shift
Repetitive tasks
Twisting and lifting
Lifting across barriers
Lifting in a compromised position
Lifting using one hand
Lifting heavy items without assistance from others

Spinal injuries
Improper body mechanics can result into significant spinal injuries. Musculoskeletal injuries occurred in approximately 17% of 80 people presented within a study, with a 40-50% prevalence annually, and a 35-80% prevalence within a lifetime (Baptiste & Nelson, 2004). The human spine is composed of vertebrae, which consist of 33 bones which encase the spinal cord. It also consists of discs, ligaments, muscles, and nerves. All of these components work together to support, protect, and provide flexibility. Discs contain fibrocartilage and lay between the vertebrae. These discs acts as “shock absorbers” when an individual sits, stands, walks, and lifts (University of Virginia, 2016). Nerves are responsible for carrying out messages throughout the body. Finally, the muscle and ligaments are responsible for producing movement.

Various spinal injuries or disorders that can result from improper body mechanics can include: lower back pain, herniated disc, facet joints, spondylosis, spondylolisthesis, and spinal stenosis. Lower back pain is prevalent in healthcare workers today. This ailment is caused by extensive sitting, quick movements, heavy lifting, spinal fractures, degenerative disc disease, spasms of the muscles, fibromyalgia, and more. Excessive or improper movement can cause the disc within the vertebrae to protrude causing a herniated disc. Most of these occurrences occur within the lumbar and sacrum area. Excessive leaning forward as well as twisting can degenerate the facet joints. Spondylolysis occurs when there is a weakness in a section of the vertebra called the pars interarticularis (Cleveland Clinic, 2014). Spondylolisthesis occurs when the vertebrae slips, resulting in a restricted range of motion. Spinal stenosis can be a congenital (condition in which you are born with) disease or a condition that occurs with age that causes narrowing of the spine. The narrowing causes the spinal cord and/or nerves to compress resulting in pain. All of these disorders or injuries can be reduced or eliminated through the use of appropriate body mechanics.
How can I use proper body mechanics?

Appropriate body mechanics can be initiated with the appropriate training. Many facilities give their employees continuing education opportunities in which they learn how to utilize proper ergonomics. Other facilities mandate this training during new hire orientation. According to literature produced by the University of Virginia (2016), proper body mechanics can be demonstrated by doing the following:

- Make sure your feet are planted firmly before initiating movement
- Do not bend at the waste, bend at your knees
- You can support your spine by tightening your muscles when you lift
- Utilize both hands
- Make sure a load is close to your body when moving it
- Use the muscles in your legs when you lift
- Always keep your body in an upright, natural position

Lifting should not restrict your breathing, if it does get help before you lift.

In conclusion, sterile processing technicians and other hospital staff are at an increased risk of spinal injury that has resulted from improper ergonomics. With training and education, and the alleviation of bad habits such as poor posture and slouching when sitting, the technician may decrease their risk of injuries. In order to be more productive, the healthcare worker should never take short cuts in order to get the job done. If it is quicker to retrieve an item through over reaching, think twice. Unfortunately, your spine may suffer from it!
How Are You Lifting, Pulling, and Pushing in SPD?

Post Test 2016

1. Trauma occurs when proper ergonomics is used.
   TRUE          FALSE
2. Utilizing the appropriate body posture, mechanics, and equipment when lifting, and other resources while working can define ergonomics.
   TRUE          FALSE
3. Lack of training for healthcare staff can result in the use of improper body mechanics.
   TRUE          FALSE
4. It is okay to lift items with one hand to avoid injury.
   TRUE          FALSE
5. Human vertebrae’s consist of 33 bones.
   TRUE          FALSE
6. The vertebrae acts as “shock enablers”.
   TRUE          FALSE
7. The nerves in the spine are responsible for full range of motion.
   TRUE          FALSE
8. Facet joints can weaken by leaning to the side when a person sleeps at night.
   TRUE          FALSE
9. When the spine widens it results in spinal stenosis.
   TRUE          FALSE
10. Lifting that restricts your breathing can indicate that you need assistance before lifting.
    TRUE          FALSE

To receive one CEU credit, complete the quiz and send this page only, via normal mail:

Lana Haecherl
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Your certificate will be sent via email if your score is greater than 70%. If you are not a member of NCAHCSP, please include a fee of $20.00 along with your Membership Application, found on the website (www.ncahcsp.org). Please allow at least six weeks for processing.

CEU Expiration Date:       April 30, 2021

PRINT NAME CLEARLY:___________________________________________

E-MAIL ADDRESS:___________________________________________

□ (This is a new e-mail address)
Blueberry Buckle

Mix together
¾ cup sugar
¼ cup soft shortening
1 egg
½ cup milk

Sift together and stir in
2 cups flour
2 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt

Fold in 2 cups well drained blueberries

Pour into 8”x 8” greased and floured baking pan

Sprinkle top with CRUMB MIXTURE

½ cup sugar
1/3 cup flour
Dear Steamie,

I have been working in the Operating Room for several years now and just don’t understand Why It Takes So Long to get instruments back?

Thank You,

Curious Scrub tech

Dear Curious,

I am so glad you asked that question. Generally, it takes around 4 hours for an instrument set to complete the process, but can be much longer for those items that must be sterilized by alternate methods such as ETO.

The journey begins after transport to the decontamination area. In this area, items are sorted to be cleaned either manually or by mechanical washer. Instruments must have the bioburden removed, with all ports flushed and brushed. Some items such as robotic instruments require special pre-cleaning as well as processing in an ultrasonic. Typical cleaning process time averages around 45 minutes.

Next we move on to assembly. After pulling the count sheet, each instrument is checked for functionality and cleanliness. Depending on the size of the instrument set and the complexity of devices assembly could take 15-20 minutes.

Next we move on to Packaging and Sterilization. The packaging process time will vary as well depending on rigid container system, a piled high wrap station and peel pouch station. The average steam sterilization cycle is 1 hour. Be reminded that these items must be cool to touch prior to transport. Cooling time can vary due to density and metal mass of the set.

These time frames are of course best case scenarios, but typically a minimum time frame for terminal processing. It takes so long because just like your specialty we are required to follow regulatory agency and manufacturer guidelines.
Up Coming Education Meetings

Please make plans to join us April 20th through April 22nd for the 2016 NCAHCSP Annual meeting, “Under the Microscope”. The meeting will be held in beautiful Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. All the details are on our website www.ncahcsp.org. This year the meeting will focus on standards, validation, quality management, product selection, and best practices. It’s packed with education and promises to be a great experience.

The summer meeting will be held on August 19th in Winston-Salem NC, at the Hawthorne Inn.
North Carolina Association for Hospital Central Service Professionals will establish itself statewide as the leading educational organization through innovative programs that enhance the development of the Central
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