

## NAS SIGONELLA'S ERGO TIPS REDUCE RISK OF WORK RELATED MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

The new complementing series to the Naval Air Station Sigonella (NASSIG) Poster program is the Ergo Tips fliers.

These fliers discuss a variety of ergonomic hazards and ways to reduce ergonomic risks.

Ergonomics is the science of fitting the work to the worker, instead of requiring the worker to adapt to existing working conditions. Work tasks that require using one group of muscles for long periods during each day's work shift tend to fatigue those muscles. This overburdening may lead to a work related musculoskeletal disorder, or WMSD, a disability that usually involves weakness and discomfort. WMSDs commonly involve the wrists, arms, shoulders, neck, legs, or back. The discomfort often improves after discontinuing activities that weaken the affected muscles and getting medical treatment for the WMSD.



**NASSIG Ergo Tip flier**



**Ergonomically designed workstations minimize the risk of WMSDs.**

The goal of an ergonomics program is to reduce the frequency and severity of WMSDs by redesigning work tasks or workstations using procedures and tools that minimize the risk of WMSDs. Work tasks, equipment, and tools that are ergonomically designed help to reduce the risk of work-related injuries and WMSDs by making it easier for the worker to avoid repetitive motions, awkward positions, and unnatural postures.

While conducting ergonomic assessments at NASSIG's Supply, Administrative, Comptroller, and Public Works departments, Wanda Walters, NASSIG's Ergonomics Program

Manager, took photographs of all the work stations and workers in these departments. Ms. Walters, one of the originators of the highly successful

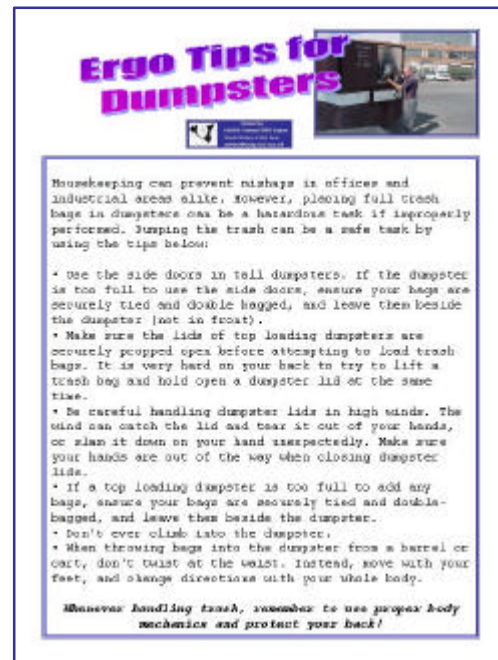


**Assessment photos serve as a visual reminder of safe and healthy work practices.**

NASSIG Safety Poster Program, realized that assessment pictures could serve as a visual reminder of safe and healthy work practices. She developed a format similar to that of the Safety Posters to create 8 ½ x 11 color *Ergo Tips* fliers. Initially, the fliers were distributed at NASSIG Safety and Traffic Council meetings to attendees representing departments where the ergonomic assessment photographs had been taken. The representatives were asked to post the fliers on their departmental bulletin boards and at the photographed workstations to promote safe work practices.

The *Ergo Tips* fliers were an immediate sensation and were requested in other work areas such as the Environmental Department. Within a month of the series conception, the *Ergo Tips* fliers were featured on the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) website

<https://bumed.med.navy.mil/med24/med-422/Topics/Slidegallery/gallery.htm> - Patient Handling (military access only), and in the U.S. Marine Corps Safety newsletter. The fliers were also compiled on CDs, which have been distributed throughout the Department of Defense and can be ordered electronically through [waltersw@nassig.sicily.navy.mil](mailto:waltersw@nassig.sicily.navy.mil).



Each flier in the *Ergo Tips* series identifies a risk factor that is related to a work related musculoskeletal disorder. The risk factors include tasks

involving repetitive motions, activities that require maintaining a fixed posture, non-adjustable workstations, awkward body postures, vibrating tools and equipment, and tasks that require muscular exertion. The fliers provide tips for avoiding or relieving such risk factors for WMSDs. Photographs in the fliers show ergonomic risk factors as well as examples of ergonomically safe work practices. Since most of the photographs used in the fliers were taken during NASSIG ergonomic assessments, NASSIG workers can easily make the connection between the helpful information offered by the fliers and their own work situations.

Point of Contact: Wanda Walters, NASSIG Command Ergonomics  
Program Manager  
Telephone Number COM 011 39 095 86 6267 DSN (overseas) 624-6267  
Email: [waltersw@nassig.sicily.navy.mil](mailto:waltersw@nassig.sicily.navy.mil)