



for Food Service

Ease Your Pain

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In kitchens there are tasks that can cause back pain or upper limb injuries that can affect hands, wrists, shoulders and neck.

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- When staff continuously stand in one position (called a static posture), while cooking or preparing food, pooling of blood in the lower extremities may occur leading to muscle fatigue and pain.

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- Prolonged standing on hard work surfaces such as concrete can create contact trauma and pain in the feet.

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- Awkward neck postures, from constantly tilting the head downward or upward to cook/prepare/serve food, can lead to neck strains and muscle stiffness.

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- Repeatedly lifting the arms or over-reaching can irritate the shoulder, possibly leading to arm and shoulder strain.

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- Performing hand-intensive tasks (such as chopping, stirring, and scooping) with a bent wrist creates considerable stress on the tendons of the wrist and can lead to irritation and swelling.

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Here are some suggestions to follow that will help prevent injuries and may ease your pain:

- ✓ Avoid static postures by continually changing your position. Use a foot rest bar or a low stool to help alter your posture by raising one foot and then the other.

- ✓ Use anti-fatigue mats, if available, on hard work surfaces. Anti-fatigue mats help contract and expand the muscles of the person standing on them increasing blood-flow and reducing fatigue.

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- ✓ Wear shoes with well-cushioned insteps and soles.

- ✓ If possible, vary your activities to space out repetitive tasks.

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- ✓ Make stretching a part of your daily routine.

- ✓ Avoid awkward postures. For example, reposition tasks in front of you rather than reaching above or behind your body to get supplies.

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- ✓ Minimize reaching by organizing your work environment so that most cooking processes can be completed within easy reach and while keeping your elbows in close to your body.

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- ✓ Use mechanical aids for chopping, dicing, or mixing foods (such as food processors and mixers) rather than hand chopping or mixing.

- ✓ If feasible, reduce the amount of chopping tasks by purchasing ready-made salads, pre-sliced onions and vegetables, and other pre-prepared foods.