



e r g o n o m i c s a t w o r k

ERGONOMIC TIPS FOR CUSTODIANS

**Summary of Educational Sessions on March 15-16, 2004
Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board**


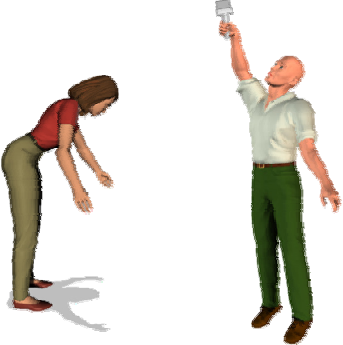


By

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Introduction

The following is intended as a summary of the main suggestions and tips presented during the one-hour custodian educational session on March 15, 2004 and the subsequent practical session on March 16, 2004. This handout is meant to accompany the slides used in the presentation.

Keep in mind that the tasks of a custodian are physically demanding and there may not always be a “perfect technique” for certain tasks. However, there is often a preferred or better method. Use the following questions to direct you to the most likely preferred method for the situation you are facing.

GENERAL WORK TASKS	
Try to do the following:	Try to avoid the following:
 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Move your work, not your body whenever possible. Look for ways to raise, lower or bring your work as close to this position (the “handshake posture”) as possible.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try to eliminate or at least minimize the amount of bending, reaching, and twisting you do to reach your work.
	

GENERAL WORK TASKS

Try to do the following:



- Change positions frequently, especially if you cannot get into the “handshake position”. For example, alternate squatting with kneeling and bending.
- Remember, many of your tasks are not a problem when done once or twice but can be very hard on your body when done tens or hundreds of times a day.

Try to avoid the following:



- If you can, alternate tasks regularly so you are not doing the same thing for prolonged periods. For example wipe down some seats and then some tabletops instead of doing all the seats in the area at once and then coming back to all of the tabletops.

MOPPING (AND SWEEPING)

Try to do the following:



Try to avoid the following:



- Use small, “figure 8” strokes while keeping your body as upright as possible (“handshake posture”).
- Use your feet, legs, hips and shoulders to move the mop head.
- Instead of scrubbing dirty areas with the mop, allow them to soak first to loosen up the dirt. For gum and other tough items, use scrapers and other tools instead of the mop.
- Change your movement patterns frequently.
- Try to avoid doing large areas or large, sweeping motions that require bending, twisting and reaching – remember, you can do these movements tens or hundreds of times in a shift.

WRINGING OUT MOPS

Try to do the following:



- Only fill the mop bucket half way to allow enough room for the mop head to drain.
- Use you knees and legs to push down on the handle of the mop bucket.

Try to avoid the following:



- Try to avoid bending from the waist to push down on the handle of the mop bucket – remember, you can do these movements tens or hundreds of times in a shift.

VACUUMING (UPRIGHT AND DRY/WET)

Try to do the following:



- Walk with the vacuum and take advantage of the reach of the nozzle and its extensions.
- Let the machine do the work instead of trying to forcefully scrub the floor.
- Avoid over-filling the bag to maximize dirt pick-up.

Try to avoid the following:



- Try to avoid bending and reaching under tables – remember, you can do these movements tens or hundreds of times in a shift.

BUFFING

Try to do the following:



- Adjust the handle height so it allows you to hold the controls against your waist.
- Much like mopping, work in a small area while using your body to guide the machine from side to side. Remember, the machine will move with little effort if you are positioned correctly.
- Use a relaxed grip on the handles.

Try to avoid the following:



- Try to avoid doing large areas or large, sweeping motions that require bending, twisting and reaching – remember, this way takes much more effort and you can do these movements tens or hundreds of times in a shift.

CLEANING

Try to do the following:



Try to avoid the following:



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a relaxed grip on sponges and rags.• Let the cleaning products soak on the surface, especially on particularly dirty areas.• Alternate hands for spray bottles and wiping tasks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try to avoid gripping sponges, rags and towels too tightly – remember, you can do these movements hundreds of times in a shift. |
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