Job Dictionary

Personal Care Worker
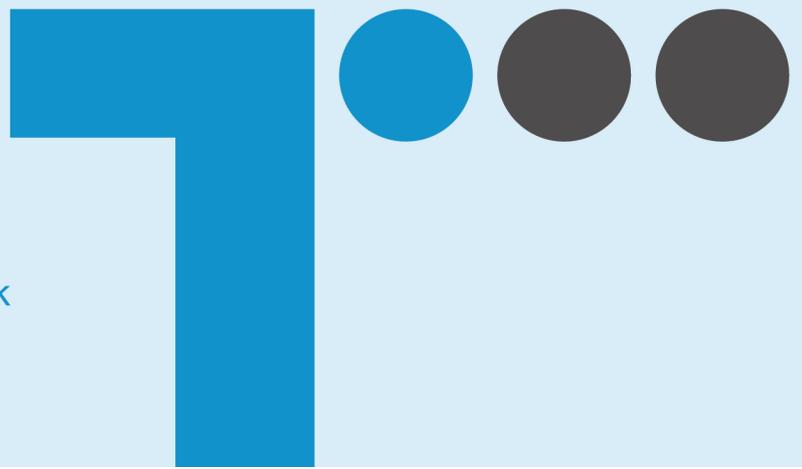
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Purpose and Development of the Job Dictionary

This job dictionary serves as a generic resource providing detailed analysis of typical tasks performed in key aged care roles. Its primary purposes include providing **objective information** on the physical demands associated with aged care roles and tasks, highlighting risks and potential locations of **musculoskeletal injuries**, and functioning as a valuable tool for workplace safety and the mitigation of **hazardous manual handling** risks.

Understanding Hazardous Manual Handling

According to Safe Work Australia, hazardous manual handling encompasses any **manual handling** activity (e.g., lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving objects) that involves **one or more** of the following risk factors:

- Repetitive, sustained, or awkward forces, movements, or postures

- High or sudden force

- Exposure to vibration

Integration with Risk Management Processes

This job dictionary was developed using comprehensive data collected from eight venues and 43 tasks through Etiscope wearable technology. Designed as a **supplementary tool**, it supports Safe Work Australia's *Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice* (2019, p. 59) by enhancing "the risk management process for manual tasks." The dictionary specifically assists aged care employers and safety professionals with:

- Identifying hazardous manual handling situations in typical aged care roles

- Assessing hazardous manual handling risks with objective data

Technology-Driven Assessment

The data collection process utilized advanced Etiscope sensors and software to capture precise measurements of physical movements and postures across various aged care tasks. This technology-driven approach provides unprecedented insights into the biomechanical demands placed on workers in different aged care roles.

Industry-Wide Application

By analysing data across multiple venues, this resource establishes industry benchmarks for manual handling risks. This allows individual businesses to compare their operations against sector standards and identify areas for improvement in their safety management systems.

Acknowledgement

The creation of this job dictionary was made possible through the generous funding provided by the Mutual Benefits program. This resource was developed using data obtained through wearable technology assessments conducted with Etiscope sensors and software, providing valuable insights into manual handling risks.

We also acknowledge Trinity Insurance, whose support and access to policyholder clients were essential in facilitating the manual handling assessments that generated the data for this resource.

Finally, we thank the businesses that welcomed Trinity Insurance into their operations, allowing us to conduct these manual handling risk assessments using the wearable technology. Their cooperation has been essential in the development of this industry benchmark resource.

Disclaimer:

This document is published by Trinity Insurance. The information provided in this job dictionary is based on data collected through wearable technology assessments across various Trinity venues. While efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, this resource is intended as a general guide and should not be relied upon as the sole basis for managing manual handling risks. Individual assessments may vary based on specific workplace conditions and tasks. Employers and workers are encouraged to use this information in conjunction with other risk management strategies and to seek professional advice where necessary. Neither the creators of this resource nor any affiliated organisations accept liability for any injuries, damages, or losses arising from the use or misuse of this information.

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The creators of this job dictionary and all associated parties make no representations or warranties, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness, or reliability of the information contained herein. This resource is provided for informational purposes only and is based on data collected from wearable technology assessments in various hospitality settings.

The use of this resource does not guarantee the prevention of manual handling injuries or compliance with legal or safety standards. Users are responsible for applying the information appropriately and conducting their own assessments based on their specific workplace conditions.

The creators and affiliated organizations shall not be liable for any direct, indirect, incidental, consequential, or punitive damages arising from the use of, or inability to use, this resource. This includes, but is not limited to, any loss of data, injury, or financial loss. Users should seek professional advice to address their specific needs and ensure comprehensive risk management.

Trinity Insurance

Role:	Personal Care Worker/Nurse
Task:	Transfer Resident: bed to chair

Based on the averaged data obtained across 7 Wearable Technology assessments for this task

Summary Risk Score:

79.36 points	substantial risk category

Perceived Exertion:

Medium

Key Contributing Factors:

1. Bend forward 20-45 degrees
2. Load handled - side bend
3. Bend forward 45-90 degrees
4. Load handled - back twist

Body Parts Contributing to Risk

6.07
23.11
50.17

Snippet of images from data footage:

Physical Task Demands

TASK DEMANDS:	N	O	F	C	OBSERVATION:
Handling Load Sitting	✓				
Handling load standing		✓			Adjusting positioning of resident while fitting/removing harness
Squatting Kneeling Crawling	✓				
Looking up		✓			Looking up at suspended resident while guiding them to target location
Looking Down		✓			Looking down at harness when strapping around resident's waist; adjusting stand height on sit to stand lifter
Bending Spine Forwards		✓			Bending forwards when fitting/removing harness beneath resident; positioning resident's legs onto bed while suspended in harness; attaching/detaching harness from lifter
Twisting spine to side		✓			Twisting when checking harness placement behind seated resident; positioning resident's legs onto bed while suspended in harness
Bending spine backwards	✓				
One or both hands above shoulder	✓				
Reaching forward/sideways		✓			Bending forwards when fitting/removing harness beneath resident; reaching for sit to stand lifter handle; attaching/detaching harness from lifter
Gripping/grabbing		✓			Gripping harness when positioning around seated resident's waist; gripping sit to stand lifter handle; pushing sit to stand lifter
Carrying		✓			Guiding suspended resident's path while aligning with bed

Exerting force in an awkward posture	✓		Rotating sit to stand lifter when pivoting to align angle with bed before lowering resident

N = Never, **O** = Occasional (1–33%), **F** = Frequent (34–66%), **C** = Constant (67–100%)

Trinity Insurance

Role:	Personal Care Worker/Nurse
Task:	Transfer Resident: chair to chair

Based on the averaged data obtained across 3 Wearable Technology assessments for this task

Summary Risk Score:
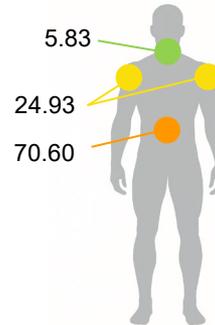
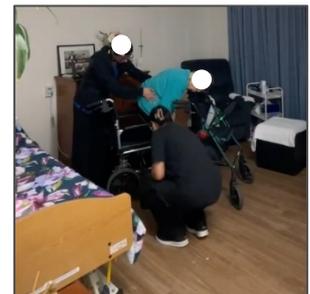| 101.33 points	substantial risk category

Perceived Exertion:

Medium

Key Contributing Factors:

1. Bend forward 20-45 degrees
2. Load handled - side bend
3. Bend forward 45-90 degrees
4. Load handled - back twist

Body Parts Contributing to Risk

5.83

24.93

70.60

Snippet of images from data footage:

Physical Task Demands

Task:	N	O	F	C	Observations:
Handling Load Sitting	✓				
Handling load standing		✓			Adjusting positioning of resident while fitting/removing harness
Squatting Kneeling Crawling	✓				
Looking up		✓			Looking up at resident when adjusting feet/legs
Looking Down		✓			Looking at resident's legs/feet positioning when aligning with sit to stand lifter; checking harness placement behind worker;
Bending Spine Forwards		✓			Adjusting resident's feet/legs; adjusting seated resident's posture when fitting/removing the harness; adjusting position of chair prior to lowering resident; monitoring resident's alignment with target chair
Twisting spine to side		✓			Checking harness placement behind worker; adjusting position of chair prior to lowering resident
Bending spine backwards	✓				
One or both hands above shoulder	✓				
Reaching forward/sideways		✓			Placing harness strap onto handle of sit to stand lifter; adjusting position of chair prior to lowering resident;

Gripping/grabbing		✓	Handles of wheelchair when manoeuvring; handles of sit to stand lifter when transferring resident between chairs; harness straps when attaching to lifter
Carrying	✓		
Exerting force in an awkward posture		✓	adjusting position of chair prior to lowering resident

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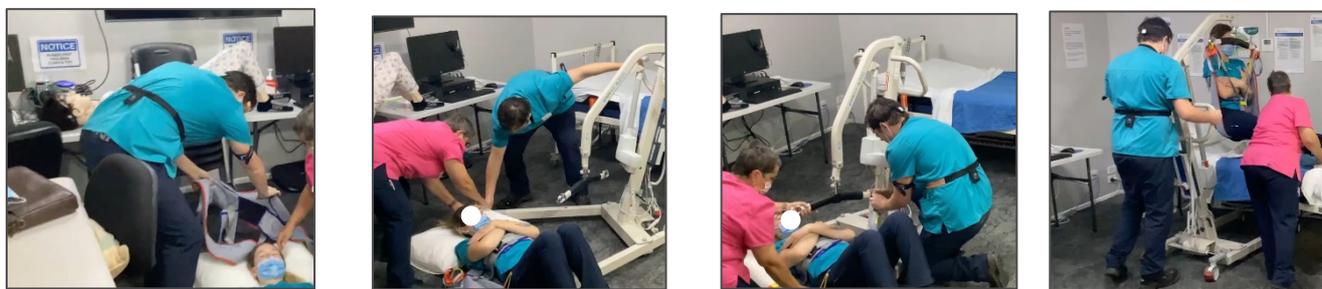**Role:** Personal Care Worker/Nurse

Task: Transfer Resident: floor to bed

Based on the averaged data obtained across 2 Wearable Technology assessments for this task

Summary Risk Score:

67.00 points	Possible Risk

Perceived Exertion:

Medium

Body Parts Contributing to Risk

8.25

16.25

42.50

Key Contributing Factors:

1. Bend forward 45-90 degrees
2. Bend forward 20-45 degrees
3. Load handled - back twist
4. Neck flexion 25-50 degrees

Snippet of images from data footage:

Physical Task Demands

Task:	N	O	F	C	Observations:
Handling Load Sitting	✓				
Handling load standing		✓			Guiding residents suspended body when manoeuvring lifter towards bed
Squatting Kneeling Crawling		✓			When rolling resident's body to fit harness beneath; attaching harness straps to lifter handles
Looking up		✓			Looking up at suspended resident while guiding them to target location; looking up at arm of the lifter machine to avoid resident knocking their head
Looking Down		✓			When adjusting harness placement when resident is on the floor; when elevating resident from ground level using lifter
Bending Spine Forwards		✓			Lowering torso towards resident at ground level; fitting/removing harness; aligning base of lifter machine with resident's body; attaching/removing harness from lifter
Twisting spine to side		✓			Fitting/removing harness from beneath resident; aligning lifter with placement of resident's body on the floor before attaching straps
Bending spine backwards		✓			When high reaching to hang harness over lifter once task completed
One or both hands above shoulder		✓			Extending arms above head when reaching for resident on the floor without squatting to lower centre of mass to ground level; hang harness over lifter once task

Reaching forward/sideways	✓		Aligning harness with resident's body; aligning lifter with placement of resident's body on the floor before attaching straps; attaching straps of harness to lifter handles
Gripping/grabbing	✓		when rolling residents body to fit harness; attaching harness straps to lifter handles
Carrying		✓	
Exerting force in an awkward posture	✓		Rolling resident over to fit harness while in squat/kneeling position

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Trinity Insurance

Role: Personal Care Worker/Nurse

Task: Transfer Resident: sit to stand

Based on the averaged data obtained across 4 Wearable Technology assessments for this task

Summary Risk Score:	Body Parts Contributing to Risk

49.00 points	Possible risk category

Perceived Exertion:

Medium

2.25
15.58
31.18

Key Contributing Factors:

1. Load handled - back twist
2. Bend forward 45-90 degrees
3. Bend forward 20-45 degrees
4. Load handled - side bend

Snippet of images from data footage:

Physical Task Demands

Task:	N	O	F	C	Observations:
Handling Load Sitting	✓				
Handling load standing		✓			Supporting weight of resident when assisting standing to walker; supporting weight when lowering resident from standing to seated position
Squatting Kneeling Crawling	✓				
Looking up		✓			Looking up at resident when in forward bent posture
Looking Down		✓			Looking at resident in chair when communicating procedure
Bending Spine Forwards		✓			Fitting/removing harness for stand lifter; reaching down to resident's lower leg to adjust foot placement prior to assisted stand; assisting resident to stand from seated position; fitting/removing pelican belt
Twisting spine to side		✓			Reaching down to resident's lower leg to adjust foot placement prior to stand; fitting/removing pelican belt

Bending spine backwards	✓		
One or both hands above shoulder		✓	Unravelling pelican belt before use
Reaching forward/sideways		✓	Fitting/removing harness for stand lifter; reaching for handle of walker; removing chair from beneath resident once they have stood up; holding handles of pelican belt; holding resident's hips when walking with walker
Gripping/grabbing		✓	Fitting/removing harness for stand lifter; handles of pelican belt
Carrying	✓		
Exerting force in an awkward posture		✓	Lifting resident from chair with forward bent/twisting spine posture

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Trinity Insurance

Role:	Personal Care Worker/Nurse
Task:	Reposition Resident (slider mat)

Based on the averaged data obtained from 10 Wearable Technology assessments for this task

Summary Risk Score:
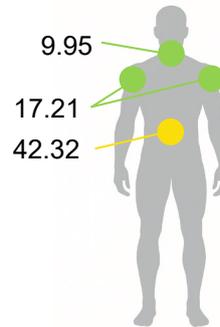
69.50 points   Possible risk category

Perceived Exertion:

Medium

Key Modifiable Factors:

1. Load handled - side bend
2. Bend forward 20-45 degrees
3. Bend forward 45-90 degrees
4. load handled - bend backward

Body Parts Contributing to Overall Risk

9.95

17.21

42.32

Snippet of images from data footage:

Physical Task Demands

Task:	N	O	F	C	Observations:
Handling Load Sitting	✓				
Handling load standing		✓			Lifting and sliding resident upwards towards bed head
Squatting Kneeling Crawling	✓				
Looking up		✓			Looking up at colleague when in a forward bent posture
Looking Down		✓			Looking at placement of sldier sheet on matress of bed; looking at resident in bed when communicating
Bending Spine Forwards		✓			Rolling resident onto side; lowering to eye level of resident to communicate; adjusting placement of slider mat beneath resident; adjusting bedsheets after repositioning resident; adjusting resident's legs; removing floor mats from bedside
Twisting spine to side		✓			Removing blanket from resident
Bending spine backwards		✓			Holding bedsheets at eye level and stretching out corners before placing on bed
One or both hands above shoulder		✓			Holding bedsheets at eye level and stretching out corners before placing on bed
Reaching forward/sideways		✓			Adjusting placement of slider mat beneath resident; rolling resident onto either side; placing bedsheets and blanket over resident
Gripping/grabbing		✓			Lifting and sliding resident upwards towards bed head; removing slider mat from beneath resident; adjusting fitting of bedsheets after repositioning resident; adjusting resident's legs
Carrying		✓			Lifting and sliding resident upwards towards bed head
Exerting force in an awkward posture		✓			Reaching forward and bending spine to rolling resident onto side; moving bed away from side wall

Trinity Insurance

Role:	Personal Care Worker/Nurse
Task:	Push Linen Trolley

Based on the averaged data obtained from 3 Wearable Technology assessments for this task

Summary Risk Score:

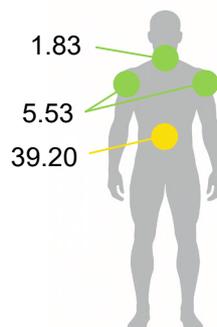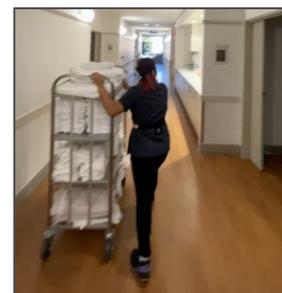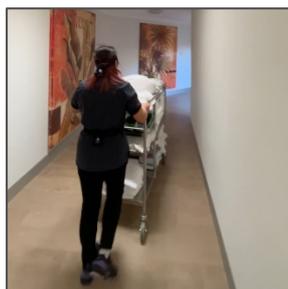| 46.50 points	Possible risk category

Perceived Exertion:

Medium

Key Modifiable Factors:

1. Load handled - back twist
2. Bend forward 20-45 degrees
3. load handled - bend backward
4. Bend forward 45-90

Body Parts Contributing to Overall Risk

1.83

5.53

39.20

Snippet of images from data footage:

Physical Task Demands

Task:	N	O	F	C	Observations:
Handling Load Sitting	✔				
Handling load standing		✔			Manouvering trolley
Squatting Kneeling Crawling	✔				
Looking up		✔			Looking over top of tall trolley while pushing
Looking Down		✔			Looking at wheels when unlocking before moving trolley; monitoring tracking of wheels when pushing trolley; looking down at shelves of trolley to monitor items while moving
Bending Spine Forwards		✔			Forward bend to create momentum around corners
Twisting spine to side		✔			Rotating position of body from side to behind trolley before moving
Bending spine backwards		✔			Arm extended behind worker while guiding trolley creates arch in lower back
One or both hands above shoulder	✔				
Reaching forward/sideways		✔			Holding linen trolley handles at chest height; holding head handles of trolley when pushing from behind
Gripping/grabbing		✔			Holding linen trolley handles at chest height
Carrying	✔				

Exerting force in an awkward posture	✓	Forward bend and twisting spine whel changing angle of trolley around corners

N = Never, **O** = Occasional (1–33%), **F** = Frequent (34–66%), **C** = Constant (67–100%)

Trinity Insurance

Role: Personal Care Worker/Nurse

Task: Push Medication Trolley & Dispense Medications

Based on the averaged data obtained from 5 Wearable Technology assessments for this task
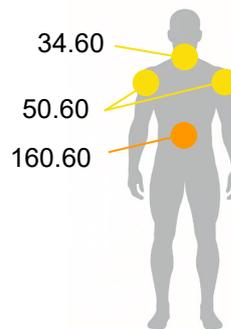
Summary Risk Score:

245.80 points	High risk category

Perceived Exertion:
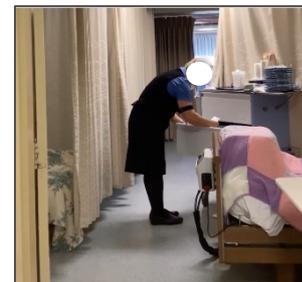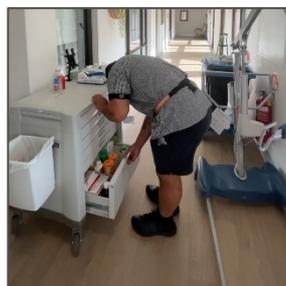
Medium

Key Modifiable Factors:

1. Forward reaching
2. Load handled - side bend
3. Load handled - standing
4. Bend forward 45-90 degrees

Body Parts Contributing to Overall Risk

34.60

50.60

160.60

Snippet of images from data footage:

Physical Task Demands

Task:	N	O	F	C	Observations:
Handling Load Sitting	✓				
Handling load standing		✓			Lifting stack of items out of trolley shelf
Squatting Kneeling Crawling	✓				
Looking up		✓			Looking over medication trolley when steering around corners
Looking Down		✓			Looking down when reversing with trolley; looking at controls for motorised trolley; looking down at front wheels when passing through doorway; looking in trolley drawer for medications
Bending Spine Forwards		✓			Retrieving medications from lower shelves on trolley; administering medication to seated resident
Twisting spine to side		✓			Rotating body to adjust angle of trolley around corners; reversing trolley through doorway with arm extended behind body
Bending spine backwards		✓			Reversing trolley through doorway with arm extended behind body and creating arch in lower back
One or both hands above shoulder	✓				

			Observations
Reaching forward/sideways		✓	Holding handles of trolley; reaching for items on and inside trolley drawers; extracting medication bottle with syringe; pouring water to administer medication
Gripping/grabbing		✓	Holding handles of trolley; lifting stack of items out of trolley drawer; pouring water to administer medication
Carrying	✓		Lifting stack of items out of trolley drawer; pouring water to administer medication
Exerting force in an awkward posture	✓		Rotating body to adjust angle of trolley around corners

N = Never, **O** = Occasional (1–33%), **F** = Frequent (34–66%), **C** = Constant (67–100%)
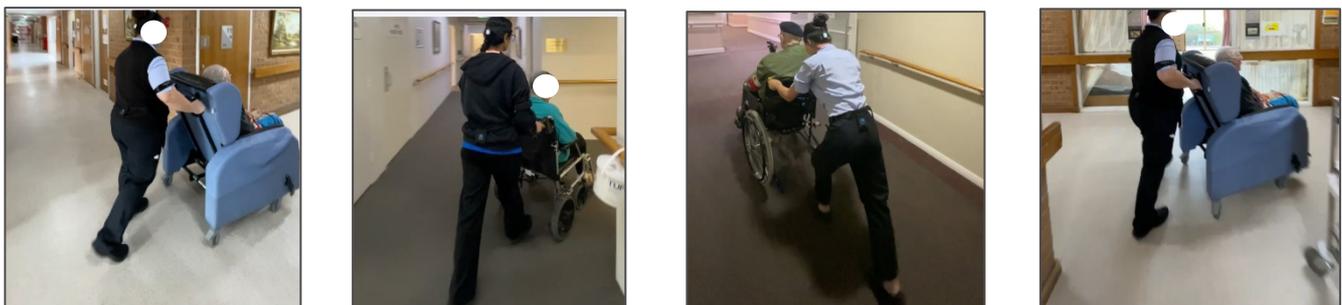

Trinity Insurance

Role: Personal Care Worker/Nurse

Task: Pushing Resident in a Wheeled Chair

Based on the averaged data obtained from 6 Wearable Technology assessments for this task

Summary Risk Score:

32.42 points   Possible risk category

Perceived Exertion:

Medium

Key Modifiable Factors:

1. Load handled - bend forward
2. Load handled - side bend
3. Load handled - standing
4. Load handled - back twist

Body Parts Contributing to Overall Risk

1.42

5.72

25.28

Snippet of images from data footage:

Physical Task Demands

Task:	N	O	F	C	Observations:
Handling Load Sitting	✓				
Handling load standing		✓			Manouvering wheeled chairs (wheelchair, princess chair, tub chair etc.)
Squatting Kneeling Crawling	✓				
Looking up		✓			looking at front wheel clearance when passing through doorways and around corners
Looking Down		✓			Unlocking wheels on wheelchair; looking at front wheel clearance when passing through doorways and around corners; pushing resident up gradient
Bending Spine Forwards		✓			Unlocking wheels on wheelchair; when producing initial force to push wheelchair forwards; pushing resident up gradient
Twisting spine to side		✓			Rotating body to change angle of chair around corners
Bending spine backwards	✓				

One or both hands above shoulder	✓		
Reaching forward/sideways		✓	Holding grips/handles when pushing chair; pushing resident up gradient
Gripping/grabbing		✓	Holding grips/handles when pushing chair; pushing resident up gradient
Carrying	✓		
Exerting force in an awkward posture		✓	Rotating body to change angle of chair around corners; pushing resident up gradient

N = Never, **O** = Occasional (1–33%), **F** = Frequent (34–66%), **C** = Constant (67–100%)

Appendix 1 – Risk Scoring Scale

Risk scoring

Greater than 400	Very high risk
200 - 400	High risk
70 - 200	Substantial risk
20 - 70	Possible risk
Less than 20	Low risk

Risk scoring and ranking utilises predictive data based on clinical analysis and predictive method aligned with the Australian Ergonomic Association as well as Safe Work Australia's Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice. The strength of this method utilises base data in a standardised manner to rank a task based on type of injury, the clinical and ergonomic pathways of these injury types, and their average injury risk. This is unique in musculoskeletal risk analysis and enables a user to utilise this alongside other Occupational Health & Safety risk scoring. In this it provides useable scores which prove more beneficial in outlining musculoskeletal risk and assessing the data and describe the risk level of a task. The outcome provides a foundation for prioritising risk response for the client. It enables updated risk score ranking for future assessments based on controls or changes implemented over time

General Recommendations for Reducing Fatigue and Injury Risk

The following outlines general strategies that may support fatigue and risk reduction across a wide range of manual handling tasks. Individual workplace conditions, roles, and controls should be considered before applying these strategies.

1. *How often the task is done (task frequency or repetition)*
2. *How long the task is done without a break (time on task)*
3. *How hard the task feels to the worker (perceived exertion and exposure)*

Task Frequency or Repetition

Task frequency refers to how many times a task is completed during a shift (e.g., changing bin bags twice, or making 10 beds). In some cases, reducing the number of times a task is repeated **may help to lower overall physical demands**.

Time Spent on Task

This relates to the length of time spent doing a task before it is completed or paused (e.g., taking a short **microbreak** of 30 seconds or more).

Some tasks are **cyclical** and can be performed continuously for extended periods—such as pressure washing. These tasks **may benefit** from being broken into smaller time blocks (e.g., three 20-minute sessions instead of one 60-minute session).

Other tasks are **discrete** and have a clear start and end—such as making a bed. These tasks **may be more easily adjusted** by looking at how often they are repeated.

Perceived Exertion and Exposure

Perceived exertion refers to how physically demanding a task feels to a worker. This includes sensations of effort, strain, or tiredness.

Exposure level relates to how long the worker feels this level of exertion during the task. For example, a 10-minute task perceived as "heavy" for 5 minutes would have a 50% exposure level.

Since perceived exertion is subjective, it can vary between individuals and change throughout a shift. A task that begins feeling "moderate" may start to feel "heavy" as fatigue builds—even if the task itself remains the same.

Workers **may benefit from being encouraged to monitor** how a task feels throughout their shift. If they notice the task beginning to feel harder than usual, they **might consider** taking a short break or changing activities where possible. This self-monitoring approach **may help to identify early signs of fatigue** and support safer task completion, regardless of the base risk level of the task.

Perceived Exertion Rating Scale Explanation

The perceived exertion scale ranges from **"Light" to "Heavy"**, with each category including an **exposure subscale** from **10% to 100%**, indicating the proportion of time the exertion is sustained.

For example, a worker may rate a task as **"Medium" exertion** with a **50% exposure level**. This suggests that while the task feels moderately demanding, the exertion is not constant—there are opportunities for rest or lower-effort periods during the task (i.e., 50% active exertion, 50% rest or lower intensity).

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