

Forest nurseries: Know the risks, prevent injuries

Working at the packing station

If you work at a packing station in a forest nursery, you might be at risk of developing a musculoskeletal injury (MSI). That's why it's important to be aware of the MSI risk factors.

Knowing these risk factors can guide you to reduce the risks by making key adjustments to your equipment, workstation, or work process.

MSI risk factors

The following factors may contribute to a greater likelihood of injury:

- Working in an awkward back, shoulder, or wrist posture, such as bending forward, twisting, or reaching over shoulder height or to the side
- Using excessive force, for example, when lifting or managing boxes
- Holding the same position for an extended period
- Repeating the same movements frequently

Reduce the risk of injury

As a worker, supervisor, or employer in a forest nursery, consider what you can do to eliminate or lessen the likelihood of MSIs in your workplace.

Adjust your workstation

Workers:

- Ensure your workstation is set up for you to do your work safely.
- Use a workstation that's positioned low enough so your shoulders are relaxed and high enough to reduce forward bending.

Employers:

- Change the angle of the boxes to reduce the risk of workers awkwardly bending their necks or wrists to place bundles in a box. This could mean building sloped workstations or propping up the back ends of boxes.
- Provide workstations of various heights, or platforms for workers to stand on, so workers' shoulders are relaxed and their backs are upright.



Side bending repetitively can increase the risk of MSIs.



Use a packing station at the right height that has been angled to fit workers.

Minimize forceful exertions

Workers:

- Avoid bending down to reach boxes below knee height or reaching up above shoulder height.

Employers:

- Develop a process that ensures boxes are positioned between workers' knees and shoulders for more comfortable lifting. One way to introduce this risk control is to start the skid at knee height and stack it just two levels high.
- Use lighter, smaller boxes to reduce the force needed to handle them. This not only reduces the risks for workers, but also for customers handling boxes during shipment and delivery.

Work from a position of strength

Workers:

- Position your feet to keep your work in front of your body and minimize reaching and twisting motions. When using a turntable or a conveyor, wait for the bundle to come to you instead of reaching forward.
- Raise the working height while making boxes, to minimize awkward back posture.

Employers:

- Ensure workers keep their work in front of their bodies to minimize reaching and twisting motions. If you have turntables or conveyors, ensure workers wait for the bundles to come to them instead of reaching forward.
- Use a dedicated workstation or pallets to raise the working height while making boxes, to minimize awkward back posture.



Reaching above shoulder height with a box can increase the risk of MSIs.



Start the skid at knee height to allow for work in a neutral posture and only stack to shoulder height.



Awkward back posture while bending to make boxes.



Raise the working height to minimize awkward back posture while making boxes.

For more information

Learn more about reducing the risk of injury by visiting WorkSafeBC's [Ergonomics](#) page.

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