



# taylor'd ERGO TIMES

## "Best" Practices vs "Common" Practices

For decades, ergonomists have been asked to train workers to lift safely. We provided training, but sometimes with reservations about how effective it would be. Does training really influence behavior? Does behavior really influence injury risk?

During the field work to create our new public/outdoor works ergo training, we developed a new way of looking at employee techniques. The approach involves identifying and documenting, or "proving", why one method is ergonomically better than another.

When workers first learn a job, they will generally apply what we call a "common practice". The common practice for holding a cutting tool, for example, would be to grip it with two hands and focus primarily on where the blade is, and what direction it needs to go to make the desired cut. On-the-job training is typically productivity and safety-oriented. However, if you ask a really small employee how s/he operates that cutting tool, he or she will likely have some unique insights about how to support the weight of it, or grip it a certain way to keep the wrist straight. The fellow who hurt his back and had to develop his own technique will offer further wisdom. And the almost-retired worker who has never had an injury, and makes the job look easy, will also have experience to contribute.

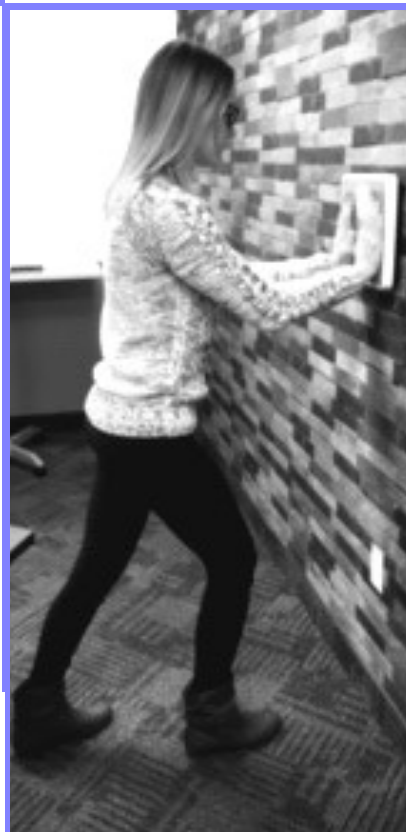
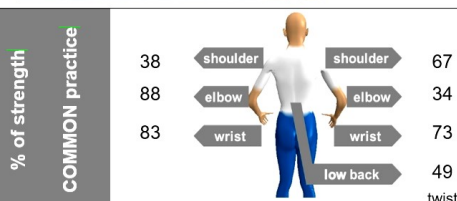
Unfortunately, in most workplaces, these tips and tricks never get shared, simply because people work independently and don't have time or reasons to share their skills. Occasionally, employees with "ergonomic" techniques might think that they are cheating somehow, and may want to hide their tricks from others.

An ergonomist can gather these techniques

### ✖ Common practice

The common practice is to shovel asphalt from the hot box using whatever foot orientation is faster. This often results in shoveling asphalt from the box with the feet at the side, while pushing the shovel into the asphalt sideways.

As shown below, this task requires considerable effort for the elbow and wrist close to the hot box (left hand in the photo below), and the shoulder and wrist at the end of the shovel (right hand in the photo below). It also creates a back twist.



Improving work design to exceed your goals for productivity, quality, and employee health.

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### Our team

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and identify which of them offer a biomechanical or physiological advantage—methods that make the job feel easier. By photographing and describing the “best” and “common” practices, employees and employers can SEE the difference. By analyzing the practices biomechanically or physiologically, we can also quantify why one method should be promoted over another. Occasionally, a method might offer advantages only for certain tasks, or for certain populations, and we can figure that out too.

Best practices are usually “administrative controls”, which should not be used instead of “engineering” controls; if a task creates a high risk of injury, it should be fixed. But these practices can help to manage risk amongst those who are required to perform the tasks in the meantime. Training in best practices can also help employees to better understand how to approach more complex tasks; The training encourages employees to figure out which tricks work for certain situations but not for others.

Our next target for best practice training is health care. Carrie recently spent some time observing health care provided in a hospital in Mexico. The most startling observation occurred when the patient had to be transferred between a bed and a recliner. The patient could not bear weight, so the procedure involved calling in two extra staff members from another floor. The fitted sheet on the bed was rolled up to provide a makeshift sling. With one person at the patient’s head, one person at the side of the bed, and one person reaching across the recliner to the other side of the bed, they lifted on the count of “uno, dos, tres”. The lift was quick, jarring, and hazardous for both the patient and the health care providers. This patient was quite small; the risk of worker and patient injury associated with using this method for a heavy patient is almost unthinkable.


Carrie remembers when manual patient transfers were commonplace in Ontario; she was told, as a new ergonomist, that we’d never get to “zero lift”. But watching this procedure performed on a patient who had undergone very recent brain surgery was a bold reminder that Ontario is on the right track. Mechanical lifts may seem slow and impersonal, but nothing about the Mexican patient transfer seemed particularly “user friendly”. Undoubtedly we can improve the risk of injury amongst Ontario health care providers, but we’ve already come a long way.

**If you have identified a specific task, in any industry, that creates injuries, ask us how we could help. Even if you have long-term engineering controls in mind, we can help you to ensure that MSD risk is minimized in the interim.**

✓ **Best practice**

This “best practice” requires the employee to move the feet, so that both feet and body face the hot box when pushing the shovel into the asphalt.

This method requires less wrist and shoulder strength; in fact, the strength demands are reduced by about half for the back, by 85-90% for the elbow and wrist close to the hot box, and by about half for the shoulder and wrist.



% of strength BEST practice	29	24	38	40	8	11	24
shoulder							
elbow							
wrist							
low back							
twist							

## FREE ergo stuff

### Ergo speakers for professional groups

If your *professional association* is looking for a speaker on an “ergo” topic, please contact Carrie. We would be happy to come out to speak with groups of human resources professionals, safety professionals, disability managers, production managers, or engineers! If you are within an hour radius of one of our offices, we’ll come at no charge! (We also offer many seminars and workshops for groups of *employees*—call for pricing.)

### Coffee with Carrie

If you can spare a half hour to chat about your ergo program, Carrie would be happy to meet you for coffee, or even chat on the phone. We’d love to hear about how you’re currently handling MSDs, quality issues related to worker performance, and productivity bottlenecks. If you’re doing great on your own, perhaps we can learn from you. Or, maybe we can help you to improve!

### Become an on-site ergo client.

Our regular ongoing clients get loads more free stuff, including:

- an ergo contest every 3 months, including prizes (our next contest is an impairment test!)
- a monthly ergo bulletin to share with workers, as a slide show or on a bulletin board (upcoming themes include “Pre-arching your spine”, and “Best practices for getting in and out of vehicles”)
- access to hundreds of one-page info sheets and puzzles on a huge variety of topics



## Ergo conference in NFLD

We’re planning to head east this summer to participate in the Association of Canadian Ergonomists’ annual conference in St. John’s, Newfoundland. Consider joining us on August 12-15. See <https://2019conference.ace-ergocanada.org/en> for details.

## Answers to the puzzle on page 4

1. all have trunks, 2. all types of wheels, 3. all have whites, 4. all are cast, 5. all are pitched, 6. all have tellers, 7. all are drawn, 8. all make deliveries, 9. all types of winds, 10. all types of mail.



## Employee ergo training from Taylor'd Ergo

After many days in the field with public/outdoor works employees, our:

**2-hour, hands-on, hazard-specific ergonomics training for public works or outdoor employees** is ready!

Employees in this program will learn how to use 17 best practices that were identified and proven useful in outdoor and public works jobs, including roads, parks, forestry, waste, mechanics, and more. Participants practice using these methods, in the classroom, and will be encouraged to consider which tips apply to more complex tasks that they encounter during their work day. (The photo above right shows a Kristina, mocking up a posture used to shovel.)

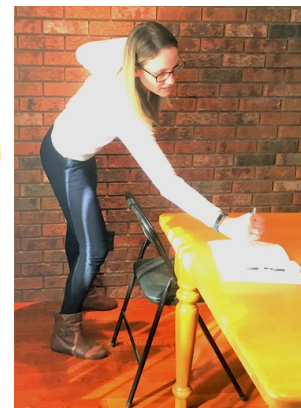
While we are scheduled to come on-site to provide this training, consider offering a full menu of ergo workshops for employees in all departments. We offer hazard-specific sessions for:

**Office workers** (seated furniture)  
**Drivers**  
**Outdoor/public works**

**Office employees at sit/stand stations**  
**General industrial workers**  
**Supervisors** (who should also participate in the sessions aimed at employees in their departments)

**Manual handlers** (lifting)  
**JHSCs**

**When is your next ergo training day? Call 519-623-7733 or email [info@taylordergo.com](mailto:info@taylordergo.com), for availability and pricing, or visit our store to authorise a session. ([www.taylordergo.com/store](http://www.taylordergo.com/store) We'll contact you to schedule.)**



### Josie's certified!

Josie was granted certification by the Canadian College for Certification of Professional Ergonomists, which is the highest and most important standard that an ergonomist in Canada can achieve. Because there is no law preventing anyone from calling themselves an "ergonomist", it's difficult for clients to understand who is qualified and who isn't. There are weekend "certification" courses available that claim to make anyone into an ergonomist. Some kinesiology degrees offer elective courses in ergonomics as part of their undergraduate degrees, and graduates may consider themselves qualified to practice.

The Canadian "CCPE" qualification requires 400 hours of ergonomics-specific university coursework, plus a minimum of four years of full time experience, including one mentored year (or 5 years without mentorship). Certification also requires ongoing maintenance (practice, education, and professional development). Interested in becoming an ergonomist? Check out <https://www.cccpe.ca/certification/application-process.html>.

**Congratulations, Josie, on joining 219 Canadian Certified Professional Ergonomists!**



### Heat stress season —always closer than you think!

If you're wondering how to prevent heat stress this season, give us a call. We can help you to:

- review last year's heat records to identify opportunities to improve your program
- identify independent zones in your facility so you can provide just the right amount of relief
- evaluate energy demands (and help you to reduce energy demands if necessary)
- draft a heat stress prevention program and policy
- provide training for your heat stress response team

Please don't wait until the temperature reminds you....heat stress prevention programs are much easier to develop during the cool weather of springtime!





## PDA/CDA and Driver Ergo training dates!

For more details, or to register online, please visit our website [www.taylordergo.com/workshop/](http://www.taylordergo.com/workshop/)

☒ Please register me for:



☐ **Physical and Cognitive Demands Analysis May 1-2 and September 4-5, 2019**

This two-day session will allow participants, including ergo co-op students and interns, nurses, safety coordinators, and return-to-work coordinators, to collect data and write an objective, concise physical and cognitive demands analysis report for the WSIB, employee's doctor, physiotherapist, or for internal company use. Participants learn how to measure forces, quantify "repetitive" work, and obtain useful workstation and task photos. They also learn how to identify and quantify cognitive, behavioural, sensory, and communication demands. Course includes a hard copy report template; a fillable form is available for an extra fee.

**\$795+hst** HST#89765 6377



☐ **Driver Ergo May 14, 2019**

Participants will learn to how identify ergo hazards encountered by drivers, and how to implement practical solutions. Learn how to adjust the driver's compartment for optimum comfort and safety, and how to select the best vehicle for you, or for your fleet. Learn about aftermarket products that might be useful to drivers. Course includes a hard copy driver ergo and vehicle selection checklist.

**\$375+hst** HST#89765 6377

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Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ P.O.# \_\_\_\_\_ (if no PO, please pay with registration)

## Triple-play!

What do the three items in each set have in common? (Answers are upside down on page 2.)

1. car—tree—elephant
2. wagon—cart—steering
3. eyes—eggs—laundry
4. fishing pole—broken leg—Broadway play
5. tent—baseball—horseshoe
6. fortune—bank—story
7. picture—card—bath
8. florist—furniture store—obstetrician
9. head—tail—cross
10. electronic—fan—junk

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