

**To reduce your risk of injury,  
PRACTICE THESE TIPS . . .**

- Don't use water jugs or other beverage containers that have sharp edges on the handles as the edges increase the pressure on your fingers.
- Wrap a serving towel around the handle if you have to use beverage containers with sharp edges.
- Move around the table to serve guests. This will promote good posture and reduce the need for reaching.
- Wear shoes with enough cushioning to relieve the stress on your knees and back when you are on your feet for long periods.

**TIPS to Prevent  
Repetitive Work**

The same muscles are used over and over again in repetitive work.

Repeated forceful movements – especially in awkward postures – increase the risk of injury.

**To reduce your risk of injury,  
PRACTICE THESE TIPS . . .**

- Vary your technique to use different muscles, such as alternating between left and right hands when carrying trays.
- Take “micro pauses”.

**Micro Pause**

- Let muscles rest by pausing for 5 to 10 seconds.
- Return to an upright posture and let your arms hang loosely by your sides.

*This pamphlet contains general information about tasks that contribute to musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs) such as sprains and strains. A musculoskeletal injury (MSI) prevention program is the responsibility of the employer. For further information, see sections 4.47 – 4.58 of the Occupational Health & Safety Regulation and the WorkSafeBC publications “Understanding the Risks of Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI): An educational guide for workers on sprains, strains, and other MSIs” and “Preventing Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI): A guide for employers and joint committees”.*

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**WorkSafeBC  
Prevention Information Line**

The WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line can answer your questions about workplace health and safety, worker and employer responsibilities, and reporting a workplace incident. The Prevention Information Line accepts anonymous calls.

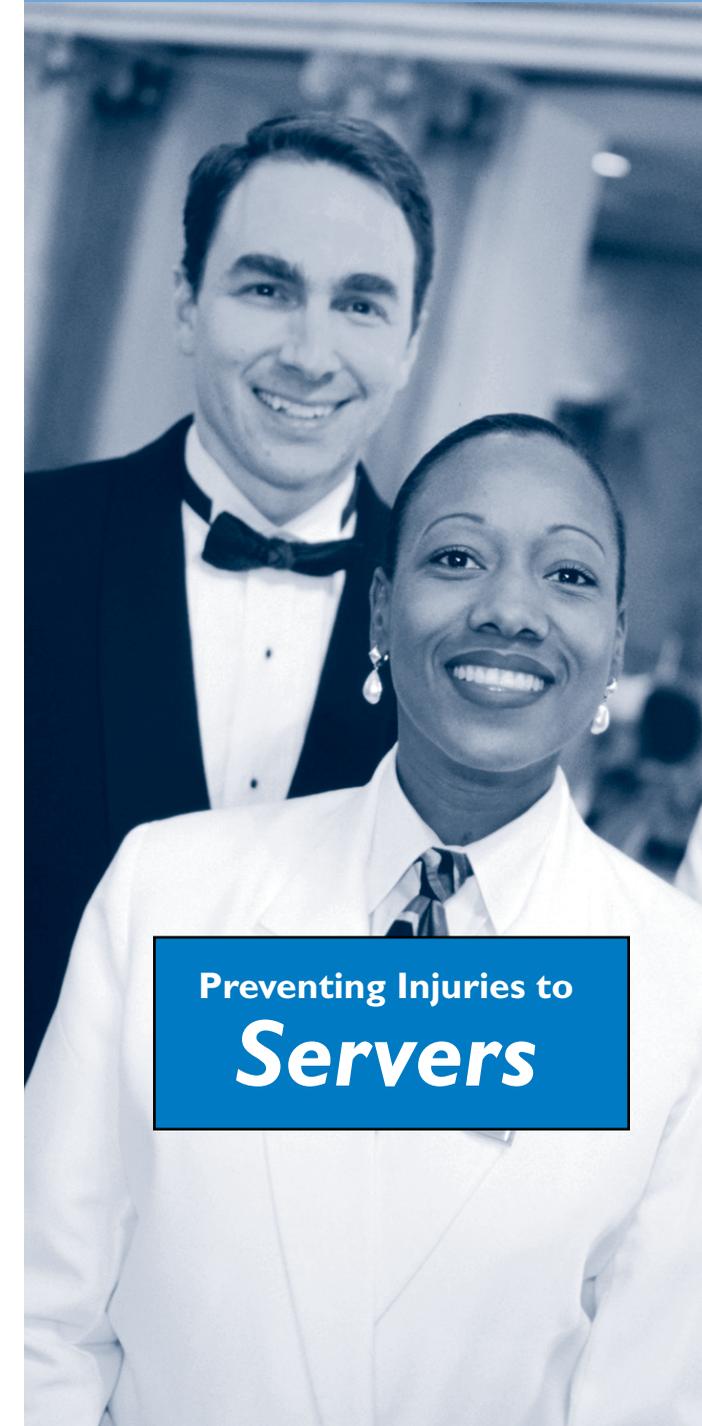
Phone 604 276-3100 in the Lower Mainland, or call 1 888 621-SAFE (7233) toll-free in B.C.

To report after-hours and weekend incidents and emergencies, call 604 273-7711 or toll-free 1 866 922-4357.

**WORK SAFE BC**

**ERGONOMIC TIPS**

for the Hospitality Industry



Preventing Injuries to  
**Servers**

## What is Ergonomics?

Many of the ways we work – such as lifting, reaching, or repeating the same movements – may strain our bodies and lead to injuries.

Ergonomics prevents these types of injuries by fitting the job to the person using proper equipment and work practices. This results in the safest way to work and prevents workplace injuries.

The high number of sprains and strains (musculoskeletal injuries – MSIs) in the hospitality industry concerns employers, workers, and WorkSafeBC.

Employers must provide equipment and establish safe work practices to reduce the risks of sprains and strains (MSI). Employers must also instruct workers in these safe work practices. Workers must follow employers' instructions to protect themselves.

*Working together, employers and workers can prevent many sprain and strain type injuries (MSIs).*

### Risk Factors

Many jobs have risks that can lead to sprain and strain injuries (MSIs). If we are aware of the risk factors, we may be able to change how we do our jobs and prevent injuries.

This pamphlet explains some of the risks of serving, and provides tips on how we do work practices to prevent injuries.

*Prevention is the best policy.*

## TIPS to Prevent Awkward Postures

Our bodies function best in comfortable (neutral) postures. Awkward body postures increase the stress on ligaments and joints. This can lead to fatigue and discomfort and increase the risk of injury.

Carrying trays, plates, or beverages during table service often results in awkward postures for servers.

*Example of awkward wrist and elbow posture*



*Example of an awkward finger posture*



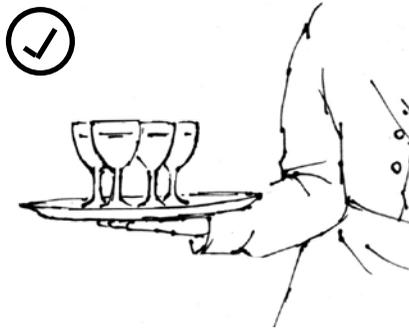
You may not feel pain or discomfort when in risky postures, but the potential for injury is still present.

*Be aware of your posture when you work.*

## To reduce your risk of injury, PRACTICE THESE TIPS . . .

- Carry a loaded tray with your shoulder, arm, and hand in a neutral position as shown below.

*Example of preferred posture*



- Carry the tray as close to your body as possible.
- Balance the tray on both your arm and hand.
- When it's not possible to carry a tray in this manner, alternate which hand you use to carry the tray and vary your posture.
- Balance the load and place heavy items close to the centre.
- Make sure the tray is clean and dry.

## TIPS to Prevent High Muscle Forces

Muscles produce force to move or hold a posture. High forces can result in injury.

High forces are required to lift, lower, carry, push, or pull heavy objects, especially in awkward postures. High forces are also required to hold a posture, especially for long periods. Here are two examples:

- Carrying plates often places the wrist and fingers in awkward positions, and requires strength to support and balance the load.
- Carrying coffee pots, water jugs, and full glasses places stress on the fingers, wrists, forearm, and shoulder.

## To reduce your risk of injury, PRACTICE THESE TIPS . . .

- Carry fewer plates at a time.
- Make two trips or ask other servers to help with large orders. The more plates you carry, the greater the stress on muscles and joints.
- Carry plates, coffee pots, and water jugs close to the body. This will decrease the amount of strain on the shoulders and wrist.
- When pouring, move the glass or cup as close to you as possible, rather than overreaching with a full jug.