

Ergonomics for Housekeeping

Stats and Facts

FACTS

Back problems are the most common musculoskeletal problems in housekeepers. Housekeepers associate their pains with their work and consider their work hard.

Causes of Common Hotel Housekeeper Injuries

1. **Repetitive Movements:** The nature of their work involves repeated actions that put them at risk for repetitive motion injuries (RMIs), particularly affecting the upper limbs, shoulders, arms, and neck due to forceful movements in awkward positions, as well as back injuries from heavy physical workloads.
2. **Working in small spaces with awkward postures.** Cleaning in limited spaces forces housekeepers into uncomfortable positions, requiring frequent changes in posture, often every few seconds, which increases the risk of musculoskeletal injuries.
3. **Trips, slips, and falls.** These are common accidents, especially when cleaning wet areas like bathrooms, where bathtubs and showers present significant slip and fall hazards.
4. **Lifting.** Workers often lift and move objects. The weight of lifting, carrying, and moving the trash can lead to shoulder and back injuries. Workers also often lift, carry, and move cleaning equipment between rooms, which can be hard on their bodies. Pushing and pulling heavy equipment and supplies carts can also lead to injury.
5. **Working with sharp objects.** Houseworkers risk injuries from broken glass, needles, and other sharp objects when collecting trash.
6. **Overexertion.** Workers overuse tendons and muscles causing

irritation. Tired tendon, ligaments, and muscles are more prone to injury.

STATS

- Only 18% of Finnish housekeepers use pain medication, whereas up to 65% of American housekeepers need pain medication for work-related problems. Of the Finnish housekeepers, 42% feel that work-induced pains affect their functional capacity, whereas 77% of American housekeepers have a similar experience.
- According to the US Department of Labor, 15% of all accidental worker deaths are attributable to slips, trips, or falls, many of which are linked to poor workplace housekeeping. In Canada, more than 40,000 workers get injured annually due to slips, trips, and falls.
- Due to their rigorous work, housekeepers are the most likely of your entire staff to suffer from an injury while on the job than any other hotel employee, resulting in a reported annual injury rate of about 7.9%. Over 90% of the 600 housekeepers polled claimed to suffer from work-related pain, 77% of which said that this pain interfered with their housekeeping duties.