

Workplace ergonomic management

-Prevention of musculoskeletal disorders

Marwa Awadi, Senior Adviser at the Norwegian Labour
Inspection Authority



Arbeidstilsynet



Prevention of musculoskeletal disorders

- Take a holistic approach
- Pay attention to working conditions
- Consider specific risk factors where they have been identified
- Take vulnerable groups into account
- Take into account individual circumstances

**Must think both organization and individual -
general and special facilitation.
Work systematically over time!**



Examples of workplace exposures

The exposures of the chefs consist of:

-Cooking: standing and walking on hard surfaces, repetitive and monotonous movements. Bent neck and back at low benches.

The exposures of the waiters consist of:

-Lifting and carrying plates and food service: repetitive, heavy and monotonous movements that strain certain parts of the body-Arms and shoulders. Walking and standing-legs.
- Serving customers: Sexual harassment, handling threats and improper conduct by intoxicated customers

Exposures applicable to both chefs and waiters:

Physical design and ergonomics:

- May be cramped space throughout the restaurant.
- Go up/down stairs when handling goods. Could be no elevator.
- Garbage disposal- throw heavy garbage bags, 30kg, from floor up to garbage containers- heavy lifting with twisting.
- Organizational: Time pressure and working hours
- Psychosocial: Communication, language challenges, conflicts, bullying

Practical situation



-Cramped working conditions where employees work!
Not when it comes to the dining rooms, which are more than enough big!



-Inappropriate working position: bent forward down to the baking machine to take out the baking stone—done several times a day

Practical situation



- Height 1.20-1.40 m
- Noise
- In the basement
- Change 8 beer kegs of 25 kg every day – every other day
- No aids

Examples of exposures in housekeeping

Physical design and ergonomics:

- May be cramped space conditions in the premises to be cleaned.
- May lack elevator and warehouse on each floor.
- Lacks good aids and good washing trolleys.
- Low beds, heavy chairs and desks.
- Hard floor and bad footwear.

Organisational:

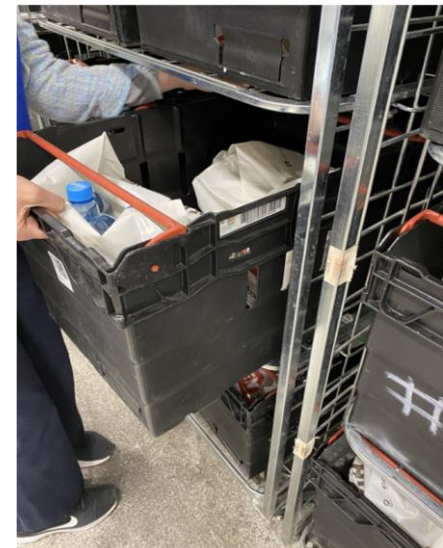
- Little thought out placement of work equipment.
- Time pressure and working time arrangement.
- Long working hours. Few breaks and lots of overtime.
- Safety delegates and employees have not been consulted when purchasing aids and equipment/furniture in the premises to be cleaned.
- Lack of training in ergonomics.

Psychosocial: Communication, language challenges, improper behaviour from guests. Stress.
Solo work.

What should you look for during the safety walk through?



- What we see (observation, inspection)—physical design, logistics, heavy objects being lifted—plates, heavy garbage bags and goods. Staircase and cramped space conditions. Door thresholds.
- What we hear and what we ask – ask managers and employees about organisation: working hours, evening and night work, long working hours. Solo work. Training. Cooperation.
- Are there aids available? - Trolleys, weight of work equipment as a vacuum cleaner.

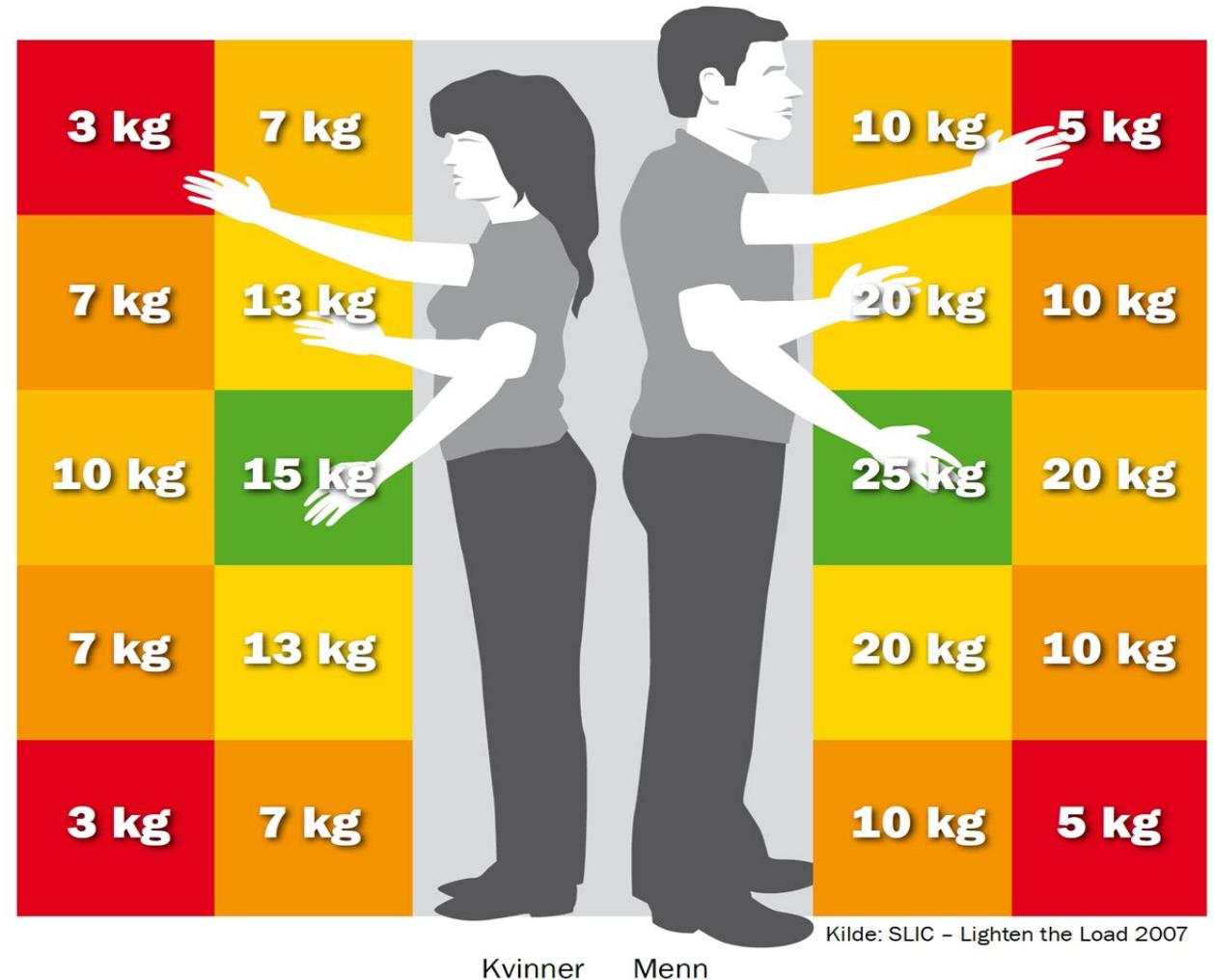


Internal control/Systematic HSE work

- Enough time must be set aside for this!
- HSE annual wheel
- It is important to involve employees in mapping, risk assessment and action plan.
- Routines on training.
- It is important to involve employees in safety walk throughs.
- Involve employees in the selection and purchase of aids
- Assistance from the occupational health service also locally.
- It is important that the risk assessment and measures apply to relevant premises and have been prepared locally.

Recommendations max lifting and carrying

- Guide on what is recommended of limit values for max lifting and carrying
- Risk assessments, training and information in connection with manual work



Summary

- ❑ Comprehensive approach to the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders where both psychosocial factors and the organisational working environment play a role. Must work systematically over time!
- ❑ Work systematically to prevent musculoskeletal disorders. The more systematic HSE work, the greater the chance of success with preventive measures.
- ❑ Research shows that musculoskeletal disorders are complex and must be worked on systematically overtime for the measures to have an effect.

