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## ***U.S. Products* Cleaning Equipment Tip of the Month Avoiding Injury and Strain with Ergonomic Portable Extractors**

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The U.S. Bureau of Labor reports that more than 40,000 janitors and professional cleaners have job-related illnesses or injuries each year — now the fourth highest of all occupations. Moreover, it is believed that this number may be dramatically underreported — and that these underreported injuries are quietly increasing every year.

According to England's Robens Centre for Health Ergonomics, which has done several studies involving cleaning workers, there are four primary areas of risk when performing cleaning tasks:

1. **Posture.** The main risk factor for aches and pains is postural — rather than the actual job tasks — because cleaning workers have to assume a variety of awkward positions to perform their duties.
2. **Tasks.** Manual lifting of such things as water-filled buckets or heavy trash bags or containers is the primary cause of musculoskeletal disorders among cleaners.
3. **Work routine.** The cleaning staff's speed and intensity of work, along with infrequent breaks, are also major contributors to injuries.

4. **Equipment.** Using equipment that is heavy, is difficult to maneuver or lift, or requires force to operate is the fourth primary area of risk.



Researchers have found that when cleaning equipment is more ergonomically designed, the number of job-related injuries in the carpet and professional cleaning industry can be reduced considerably.

Some portable hot-water extractors are the cause of work-related injuries because they simply are not designed with ergonomics in mind. Ergonomics is an applied science concerned with, among other things, the design of tools and equipment so that the people who use the equipment can do so most efficiently and safely. An ergonomic carpet extractor, for instance, is designed to work with the cleaning worker, especially when transporting it.

### **Using an Extractor...Safely**

When choosing a carpet extractor, select equipment that is easy to load and unload by a single person, especially if you are a one person operation. Avoid lifting the equipment up or down stairs or in and out of trucks or vans by yourself if they are very heavy or not ergonomically designed for one person use.

## Ergonomic Carpet Extractors

Newer, more innovative machines are addressing some of the major ergonomic concerns of carpet cleaners.

[The Solus from U.S. Products](#) is ergonomically designed for one-person operation and transport. The upright design, large rear wheels, roller handles, and built-in skid rails make the [Solus](#) easy for just one person to transport the machine up and down stairs or in and out of a work vehicle.

[The Solus](#) offers adjustable pressure up to 500 psi, adjustable instant 212° heated solution, and powerful top mounted dual vacuum system for cleaning versatility and unmatched water recovery. Increasing pressure increases agitation, thus reducing physical exertion the operator needs to use to achieve professional results. Agitation is just one element of the cleaning pie chart of Temperature, Agitation, Chemical, and Time.

Temperature is also an important part of the cleaning elements. By increasing the temperature of the water, we can reduce the chemical and time elements of the cleaning pie chart. The higher the heat, the more effective the chemical is and the less the operator needs to use. [The Solus](#) has U.S. Products signature instant heat technology, quickly delivering HOT water to the wand tip. To increase the consistency of the heat, [the Solus](#) uses an optional tank recirculation system in combination with the inline heater to raise the temperature of the water in the tank up to 125° F. With consistent heat, the job can be completed in less time with less chemical and less physical exertion. With high pressure and instant heat, [the Solus](#) works hard so the operator doesn't have to.

Choosing a portable extractor that has a high performance vacuum system for maximum water recovery is paramount. This helps improve worker productivity and decreases the number of passes carpet cleaning professionals must make to recover soiled solution. Less passes means less physical strain to the body. Engineered with this fact in mind, [the Solus 500](#) uses dual three-stage top-mounted vacuums for maximum





performance and water recovery. The vacuums are top mounted to eliminate bends and restrictions in the vacuum lines so the vacuums can perform at optimum performance levels.

When purchasing portable extractors, make ergonomics and ease of use an important factor in your decision making process. Reduce the risk of injury and still achieve professional results with compact, ergonomically designed portable extractors like [the Solus from U.S. Products](#). For more information on [the Solus](#), visit the U.S. Products website at [www.usproducts.com](http://www.usproducts.com).



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