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Why ergonomics? Grip, weight, and noise

by Robert Kravitz

Ergonomics has become one of the buzzwords of the cleaning industry, and for good reason — janitorial work includes several risk factors such as heavy, repetitive lifting, prolonged grasping, reaching, working in confined spaces, and working in awkward positions.

Continually lifting trash receptacles, hauling and emptying garbage, and relining cans are all tasks where injuries frequently occur.

In addition, vacuum cleaners — the No. 1 cleaning tool in the industry — can be the source of serious repetitive injuries if ergonomic design factors are not incorporated into the machine.

To help prevent or minimize cleaning injuries, facility service providers should develop an ergonomically effective cleaning program. Such a program can keep workers healthy — and on the job.

Here's what a cleaning industry expert has to say about [ergonomic vacuum cleaners](#).

Good body, sound production

Take these steps to run an ergonomically effective cleaning program:

- Limit the size and weight of trash bags to reduce lifting hazards.
- Wheel garbage instead of carrying it to minimize lifting.
- Use janitorial carts and buckets with wheels so they do not need to be carried when filled.
- When mopping, move the mop with the whole body, not just the arms and shoulders, and change the movement techniques while working.
- For cleaning professionals who frequently clean bathtubs, avoid



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bending; instead, stoop down and wear kneepads to protect the knees.

Robert Kravitz is president, AlturaSolutions Communications, Chicago.

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