



# Cut to the Chase!

## ERGONOMIC TIPS FOR THE EMPLOYEE

EU Project ErgoHair VS/2017/0077

ergoHair



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## EMPLOYEES

### 1. Keep participating in lifelong learning (training and education)

- Ensure that during your entire career you keep maintaining the ergonomic techniques by frequently following a refresher course
- Follow during your entire career training in 'new' ergonomic techniques

### 2. Be a good coach and mentor for future hairdressers

- Give the right example and good coaching and tips to future hairdressers.

### 3. Take care of your body

#### a) *Constantly spend attention to a good posture:*

- Avoid repetitive straining movements of the upper limbs and reduce working with raised hands and arms
- Avoid working above shoulder height (angles > 60° or > 90°) and adjust the hairdressing chair to the right height
- Use normal arm positions and movements when you are manually working with equipment
- Work less on physical boundaries, and respect your own limits
- Reduce intensive strains and pressures on the hands
- Reduce constant muscle activity
- Use the mirrors in the hairdressing salon to check your posture

#### b) *Use good working techniques, such as:*

Palm to palm method (Netherlands):

- This is a specifically designed working technique to reduce the pressure on the hands, arms, shoulders and back. Because of this the upper arms can remain low and the wrists can remain in a more or less neutral position.

PI BY RP method (France):

- Interactive training method developed by Raphaël Perrier, 2010; application available from September 2017). The idea is to – based on a 3D simulation – get a better insight into why certain actions are done, to reduce the number of cutting motions. Because of the new working technique only 30-40 cutting motions are needed for each hairstyle, as opposed to the 150 cuts which are required in the traditional cutting method. The manual allows to train virtually. The own hairstyle can also be converted to a 3D image. The manual is available through a QR-code and the videos can be used on different mobile devices.

#### c) *Use the right equipment. Use the ergonomic material the right way. Maintain the material well.*

- Do not be impatient and ensure the right adjustment/height of the hairdressing chair, backwash unit (elbow height), hairdressing saddle stool...
- Use a trolley to keep your equipment close and at the right height. Make sure to put the trolley on the right side. If you are righthanded, put the trolley also to your right.
- Use the hairdressing saddle stool
  - Use a pony saddle (no round saddle) or a bicycle saddle (if you are short)
  - Use the saddle stool to turn around the customer without bending your torso.
  - Do not slouch on it
  - You cannot use the saddle stool for all activities. Feel and decide for yourself when the use isn't possible.
  - If you have to reach a lot, go back to standing.
- Adapt the hairdryer to the type of hair
- Make sure that the scissors are sharpened and maintained well, so you have to use less force.
- Take care of the equipment so you can use well maintained material for a long time.
- Wear closed shoes, preferably with shoelaces and a heel of maximum 3 cm to avoid hurt and swollen feet. If you think you have an abnormality to your feet, consult an orthopaedist.

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d) *Ask the customer for cooperation*

e) *Do enough exercises (see further)*

f) *Announce health complaints better and faster*

- Realise that it is important to also monitor your health yourself, and to analyse your own body.
- Definitely report your problem to the doctor (often people wait too long to report or don't report at all)

### 4. Ensure balanced work

a) *Provide for a bigger variation in the type of work*

Augment the diversity in tasks.

b) *Change between standing and sitting working positions*

Provide for a better variation between standing and sitting.

c) *Take enough breaks*

d) *Avoid addiction to work*

e) *Keep a work-life balance*

### 5. Maintain a healthy lifestyle

It is a very well-known notion that hairdressers do not have the most healthy lifestyle.

a) *Avoid unhealthy products and habits to prevent MSD*

- Avoid unhealthy habits such as smoking, drugs, excessive drinking etc. because they decrease the strength of the immune system.

b) *Do movement exercises, sport...*

A good physique lowers the risk of MSD to the back and prevents stress

- Start with achievable exercises, which everybody can do under normal circumstances
- Try to do these exercises regularly

c) *Use relaxation techniques against stress (straining and stressing of the body)*

The hairdressing profession is also a psychologically demanding profession with a lot of stress because of the time pressure and because hairdressers always want to satisfy their customers. Customers notice it when hairdressers are stressed and they often take over that stress from the hairdresser. To avoid this:

- Do breathing exercises
- Do yoga

...

d) *Keep healthy nutrition in mind*

A balanced diet has an impact on potential MSD's.

- Definitely have breakfast in the morning and do not skip meals, so that you possess enough energy to be sufficiently alert during work (see peak of accidents just before noon, which is associated with a lack of food and sufficient sleep)
- Make sure you have a balanced combination of proteins, carbs and fats. Eat a lot of vegetables, fruit, ...
- Eat multiple times per day, but eat smaller portions
- Use the 80% rule: eat until you are 80 % satisfied, because your brain needs time to register the feeling.
- Eat in a calm and quiet place, without too much distraction
- Also pay enough attention to an attractive presentation of the food

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### *e) Drink enough water (hydration)*

- Only drink water and no sodas
- Regularly drink to avoid a broad scope of illnesses and afflictions.

### *f) Have enough sleep and rest*

The better your quality of sleep, the better you are suited to deal with stress. Sufficient sleep is not only important for general health, but also to avoid accidents.

### *g) Also keep in your private life a good posture and healthy lifestyle*

## **6. Contribute to a pleasant working environment and a positive atmosphere at work**

### *a) Also contribute yourself to a pleasant working environment*

- If possible, maintain a normal room temperature
- Keep in mind that your colleagues have enough room to easily move around
- Make sure to use the materials in the right way, and – if present – that you also use the right equipment

### *b) Add to a positive atmosphere at work*

- Convince your colleagues to have a positive attitude towards a good body posture and a healthy lifestyle and to pay notice to ergonomics.
- Maintain a good sense of communication with all your colleagues.
- Ensure sufficient support for your colleagues in doing the job.

### *c) Accept the right example of the employer*

- Employers must give the right example, but employees also need to accept this and be willing to follow them.

## **RELATION WITH THE CUSTOMER**

The posture of the customers can also play a role for the ergonomics of the hairdressers. Communicate with customers about safety and ergonomics in the hairdressing salon, in order for the customers to become aware that they are in the hands of a good hairdresser. Strive for cooperation with the customer for everything that concerns *the sitting position of the customer and the sitting or standing position of the hairdresser*.

Aim for a win-win situation for everybody and ask the client to adjust their posture so that the hairdresser has to assume less uncomfortable postures.