

Effective Job Rotation is About Balance

What is job rotation?

Job rotation (also known as task rotation) is often used as a way of preventing injuries and boredom, particularly in industrial settings.

Job rotation occurs when members of a team, or several teams systematically rotate between different jobs in a specific interval.



What are some benefits of job rotation?

- Provides variety and improves morale.
- Reduces boredom and monotony at work.
- Can provide a postural break (i.e. recovery time) for different body parts. There are muscle recovery benefits from alternating between static and dynamic loading jobs, especially when different body parts are used.
- Cross-training improves coverage opportunities during vacation and sick days
- If the job rotation is ordered properly, it can reduce the risk of MSI development
- A well-implemented job rotation can also reduce daily energy demands.
- Can be used as an interim solution while waiting to implement long-term design changes.

The Hierarchy of Safety

Type of control:

(Most effective)

Elimination or Substitution

Engineering Controls

Awareness Tools

(administrative control)

Training and Procedures

(administrative controls)

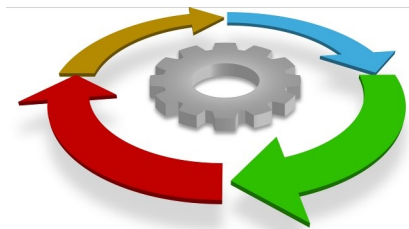
Personal Protective Equipment

(Least effective)

Job rotation (and task rotation) are considered administrative controls.

Job rotation can be used as an interim solution when waiting to implement a long-term solution like a re-design.

Job rotation can be used in conjunction with other methods to reduce the risk of MSIs.



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How to implement an effective job rotation schedule

- ◆ Rotation between jobs should take place within the shift (e.g. following break times), and could even occur more often for jobs in close proximity.
- ◆ Ensure that all team members have been properly trained to perform each position.
- ◆ Involve team members when deciding on the order of job rotation.
- ◆ Jobs within a rotation should be near each other, ideally less than a minute to change jobs.
- ◆ Each job should be evaluated for risks due to poor ergonomics to identify opportunities to improve job design.
- ◆ Job rotation is ideal for limiting exposure to repetitive and static awkward postures.

In some cases, job rotation can be used to reduce exposure to heavy loads. However, exposing several people to a dangerous task is risky.

Ensure that the task falls within ergonomics guidelines before adding it to a job rotation.

Consider the physical and cognitive demands of each job in the rotation. Ideally, each job should place different demands on the body. This allows for a variety of postures and optimizes mental alertness throughout the day.

As often as possible, alternate between or minimize the following:

- ◆ Awkward shoulder/ back/ neck/ wrist postures,
- ◆ Energy demands (e.g. walking, stair climbing, prolonged sitting or standing)
- ◆ Exposure to hand-arm vibration
- ◆ Work in a cold vs hot vs. temperature controlled environment
- ◆ Work in a loud vs quiet environment
- ◆ Work in a visually distracting environment
- ◆ Work on the right side vs. left side of a conveyor belt or assembly line
- ◆ Fine finger dexterity

