

Home health care: Housekeeping hazards

Introduction

Housekeeping activities can put you at risk for strains and sprains. Be sure to do these activities with safety in mind.

Making beds

Risk factors:

- Awkward postures - like bending over while reaching forward to tuck in the sheets.
- Gripping with force - like using a pinch grip when pulling up the sheets.

Safe work practices:

- Avoid bending forward. Bend your knees, not your back
- Flex your knees as you make the bed. Walk around the bed rather than reaching over it. If you must work from one side, keep one hand on the bed for support

Cleaning

Risk factors:

- Awkward postures - like bending over or kneeling, or reaching overhead for a long time.
- Static postures with force - like scrubbing while bending or reaching.
- Contact stress - like kneeling on hard surfaces.

Safe work practices:

- Use cleaning equipment with long handles for hard-to-reach areas.

- If kneeling, place a folded towel under your knees to avoid the pressure.
- Make sure your protective gloves fit well so you don't use extra force when gripping.
- Use a sturdy, slip-proof step stool when doing high-reach tasks.

Doing Laundry

Risk factors:

- Awkward postures - like bending forward and twisting when loading and unloading the washer and dryer.
- Gripping with force - like lifting laundry with a pinch grip which increase the force required by the muscles in your hand and forearm.

Safe work practices:

- Carry loads you can manage comfortably.
- Don't twist your body while lifting. Move side-to-side.
- Avoid bending forward. Flex your knees when reaching into the washer or dryer.
- Use a power grip rather than a pinch grip when handling laundry.
- Fold clothes at a comfortable height. Your shoulders should be relaxed.