

Understanding and Minimizing Risk of Musculoskeletal Injury

Risk factors for musculoskeletal injury when scanning include:

- Awkward shoulder abduction
- Unsupported static shoulder loading
- Forceful sustained gripping
- Awkward wrist bending and twisting
- Bending and twisting of the trunk and neck
- Sustained and repetitive use of controls on scanner
- Unsupported legs and feet

Other factors that increase risk of injury include:

- Insufficient breaks between patients
- Over-booking or slotting in extra patients
- Lack of variety in scanning types
- Old or un-adjustable equipment
- Insufficient space in scanning rooms
- Workplace stress
- Lack of technique training

Minimizing Risk of Injury for Sonographers

- Ensure equipment such as chairs, tables and scanning equipment are adjustable
- Provide assistive devices such as cushion supports and cable braces
- Ensure sonographers have the time and training for optimal set-up
- Provide sufficient breaks between patients and avoid scheduling “difficult” scans back-to-back
- Encourage sonographers to share ideas for reducing injuries
- Minimize the number of portable scans performed
- Encourage sonographers to alternate scanning arms and sitting vs standing
- Provide best practice training to encourage optimal postures and alternative scanning techniques that reduce strain
- Encourage sonographers to report their pain and injury so they can take steps to prevent it from worsening

