

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

1



Introduction

2



Health risks

3



Handling loads

4



Awkward postures

5

Recommendations
by activity

Pregnancy and breastfeeding are biological states that requires **special protection**

During the entire process of gestation and breastfeeding, **physiological, metabolic and psychological changes** take place in the woman's body. As a result, work conditions that were considered normal and hazard-free may no longer be defined as such, because they could affect the health of the mother or that of the fetus.

To recognise a situation of pregnancy or breastfeeding and request the adoption of appropriate measures, **the organisation needs to be informed of the worker's state.**

Why inform the organisation:

To implement the **Procedure to protect women who are pregnant or breastfeeding against occupational hazards**:

- Receive information about occupational hazards that could affect pregnancy, breastfeeding or the fetus.
- Receive an assessment of your work conditions in relation to pregnancy or breastfeeding.
- Adapt or implement any required preventative measures.

How to communicate a pregnancy:

- 1 **Request a doctor's appointment** using the tool for requesting healthcare on the prevention website:
 - Pregnancy: <http://www.upc.edu/prevencio/ca/salutupc/vigilancia-salut/tipus-revisio-visita-medica/visita-medica-embaras>
 - Breastfeeding: <http://www.upc.edu/prevencio/ca/salutupc/vigilancia-salut/tipus-revisio-visita-medica/visita-medica-lactancia>
- 2 **Fill in the *Notification of pregnancy / Notification of breastfeeding* document**, which is available at the above links, and submit it to the Health Monitoring and Promotion Centre at the time of the appointment.



Procedure to protect women who are pregnant or breastfeeding against occupational hazards

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

1



Introduction

2



Health risks

3



Handling loads

4



Awkward postures

5

Recommendations
by activity

Main **occupational hazards** that could affect the health of pregnant / breastfeeding workers or the fetus

A non-exhaustive list of agents to which pregnant or breastfeeding (*) workers **must not be exposed**:

- Work in high-pressure atmospheres
- Ionising radiation (X-rays, alpha, beta and gamma isotopes)

A non-exhaustive list of agents and work conditions that **could have a negative impact on the health** of pregnant or breastfeeding workers and/or on the fetus (*):

- Chemical agents (mutagens, carcinogens and reprotoxic substances)
- Biological agents in groups 2, 3 and 4
- Physical agents:
 - Extreme cold or heat
 - Knocks or strong vibrations
 - Excessive noise (above 80 dBA)
 - Non-ionising radiation
 - **Manual handling of heavy loads that represent risks, particular back injury**
 - **Awkward movements and postures**

EXPOSURE TO
ERGONOMIC
RISKS

(*) **Royal Decree 298/2009**, of 6 March, on the application of measures to promote better health and safety at work for pregnant, postpartum or breastfeeding women..

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

1



Introduction

2



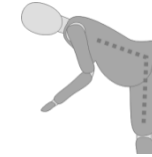
Health risks

3



Handling of loads (1/2)

4



Awkward postures

5



Recommendations by activity

Whenever possible, **avoid and/or reduce** the manual handling of loads

Manual handling of loads (MHL)

Factors that could constitute a risk for the health of the pregnant woman or that of the fetus:

- **Weight and frequency of handling:** avoid handling loads that are heavier than the maximum handling weights (see table).
- **Handling zones:** as the volume of the abdomen increases, the scope of the arms decreases and objects have to be handled at an increasing distance from the body. This situation leads to overexertion of the upper body (arms and shoulders) and the lumbar region, which limits the weight that can be handled (see the image on the right).
- **Adoption of awkward postures** (twisting or bending the torso): try to position your feet in the direction of the task that you are carrying out and bend your legs when you have to pick up a load.

	MAXIMUM WEIGHT TO HANDLE	
	REPEATED HANDLING 4 or more times in an 8 hour day or more than 50 times a week	INTERMITTENT HANDLING Fewer than 4 times in an 8 hour day
In the first six months	5 kg	10 kg
From the seventh month	Avoid manual handling of loads	

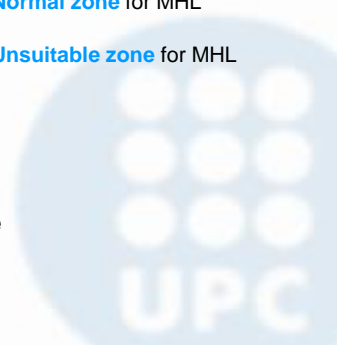


Avoid handling loads far from your body's **centre of gravity**.

As the **distance between the load and your body** increases, your **capacity** to handle it will decrease.

- **Ideal zone** for MHL
- **Normal zone** for MHL
- **Unsuitable zone** for MHL

Maximum weight to handle according to the zone
(intermittent handling)



Pregnancy and breastfeeding

1



Introduction

2



Health risks

3



Handling of loads (2/2)

4



Awkward postures

5

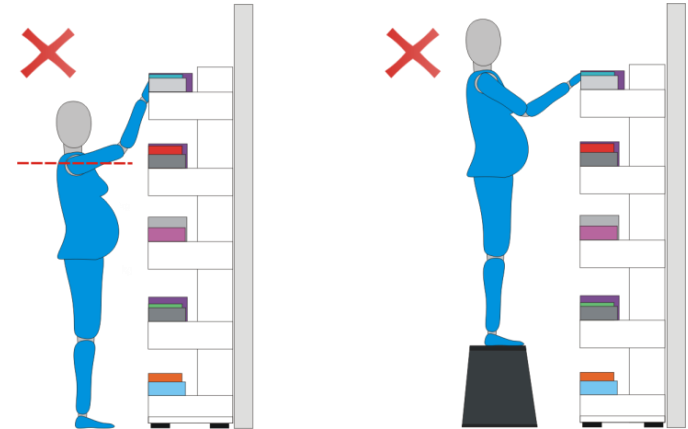


Recommendations by activity

Reduce the manual handling of loads as much as possible, but if you cannot avoid this activity, follow the **recommendations** below:

AVOID

- ✗ Using **stepladders or other elements** to reach objects that are in high places.
- ✗ Carrying loads down **ramps or stairs**.
If you do this, try to carry small loads so that you have one hand free to hold on to the handrail, whether you are going up or down.
- ✗ Repeatedly picking up **objects** that are located **above shoulder height**.
- ✗ **Bending your torso** if you are handling a load at the same time (you could lose your balance).
- ✗ Picking up **unstable loads** or loads that are difficult to hold.
- ✗ Manual handling of loads in **hot or cold environments**.



TRY TO

- ✓ Follow, whenever available, the **instructions on the package** before you pick up a load.
- ✓ **Bend your legs** to reach a lower level of shelving or to pick up objects directly from the ground.
- ✓ Use **mechanical aids** (trolleys) whenever possible.
- ✓ Ask **other people for help** if the weight and/or volume of the load is greater than the recommended amount.



Pregnancy and breastfeeding

1



Introduction

2



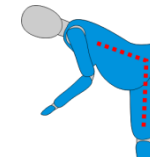
Health risks

3



Handling loads

4



Awkward postures

5

Recommendations
by activity

Whenever possible, try to **avoid adopting awkward postures** while you are working

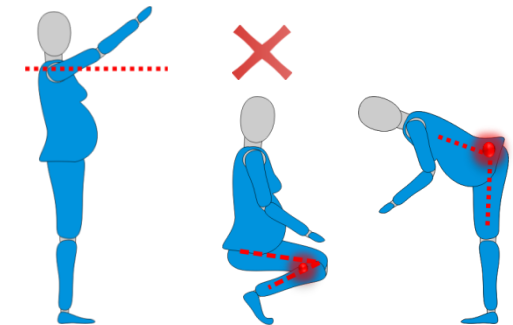
Awkward postures occur when your joints are **not in neutral positions** (the range of postures in which the joints are well-aligned). Awkward postures are also considered to be **static positions** (on foot or seated) that are held continuously or for a long period of time.

Why should they be avoided during pregnancy?

If these postures are repeated or maintained for a continuous or long period of time, **they can cause** musculoskeletal injuries, fatigue and circulation problems.

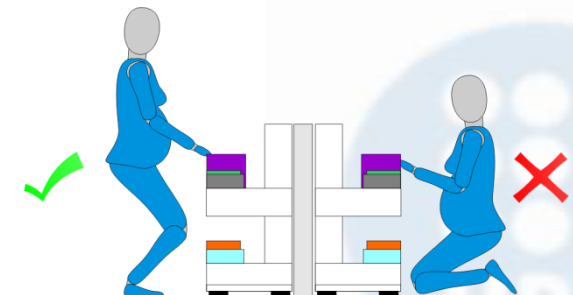
AVOID

- ✗ **Standing on your feet** for long periods: standing for over four hours in the working day.
- ✗ **Bending your torso:** when the action is repeated over 10 times/hour.
- ✗ Working in **small spaces:** risk of adopting awkward postures or receiving knocks.
- ✗ **Static postures** held for long periods (standing or sitting).
- ✗ Items you need **at an unsuitable distance** (either vertical or horizontal).



RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ **Change posture** with a certain frequency (from standing to sitting).
- ✓ Working while **standing:**
 - In the **first and second month** of pregnancy, breaks of at least 15 minutes should be established every four hours of working whilst standing.
 - In the last **three months**, avoid standing for longer than 30 minutes.
- ✓ The use of compression tights and comfortable, stable, safe shoes is recommended.
- ✓ **Items used in work** should be situated **within reach** of the worker.
- ✓ Lower the work plane to below the abdomen to carry out manual tasks.



Pregnancy and breastfeeding

1



Introduction

2



Health risks

3



Handling loads

4



Awkward postures

5



Recommendations by activity (1/3)

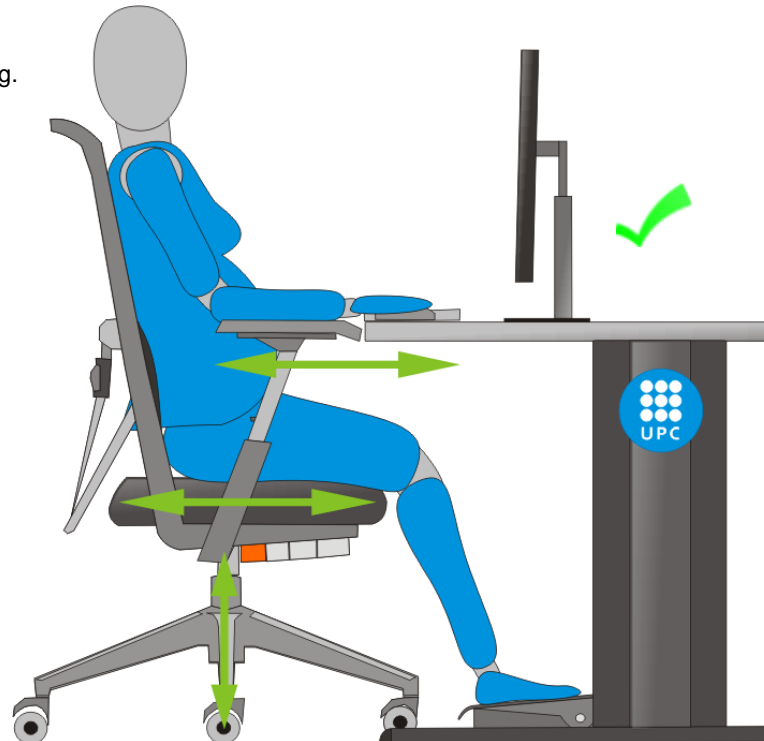
If you carry out **office** tasks, follow the recommendations **below** to **avoid adopting positions that could be harmful**

Sit with the **tilt of your backrest at a 110° angle** to avoid fetal compression while sitting.

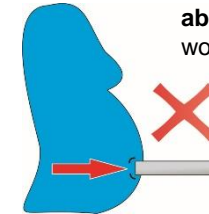
Sit as far back as possible, supporting your vertebral column at all times on the backrest (if necessary, alter the height of the backrest).

The chair should have **adjustable armrests** to make it easier to get up and the **seat** should be wide enough to enable you to sit with your legs apart.

Ensure that there is enough **space under the table** to move your legs freely.



Avoid contact between the abdomen and the work surface.



Avoid sitting for periods of over 2 hours without **changing position**, to prevent back and circulation problems.

The **items you use frequently for work** should be **within reach**, taking into account your bump.

Use a **footrest** if your feet do not reach the ground once you have adjusted the height of your chair.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

1



Introduction

2



Health risks

3



Handling loads

4



Awkward postures

5



Recommendations by activity (2/3)

When you are working in the **classroom**, follow the **recommendations** below:

Try to:

- write below head height and above hip height, to ensure that you adopt a safe work posture.

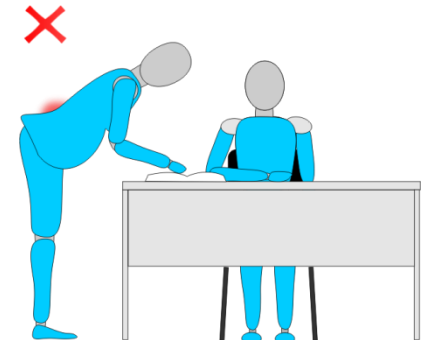
Avoid:

- twisting your torso (when you turn to address a student, but keep your feet in the direction of the whiteboard).

Avoid standing up for **long periods of time**.

Walk around for short periods, but be aware of the edge of the dais.

Try to **alternate between** standing and sitting positions.



Avoid **bending your torso** when you are attending to a student. If necessary, find a point of support to reduce the tension.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

1



Introduction

2



Health risks

3



Handling loads

4



Awkward postures

5



Recommendations by activity (3/3)

If you work in a laboratory, follow the recommendations below to avoid adopting unsuitable postures

Shelves out of reach of the individual.



Unsuitable distance and height of equipment

Shelves that are commonly used should be situated at a height that makes it easy to reach them from a sitting position.

Avoid lifting the arms continuously without any point of support.

Due to their lack of stability and lumbar support, **stools are not suitable during pregnancy.** Their use should be limited to infrequent, short tasks.

Adjust the height of the equipment and the angles of observation to avoid bending your neck.

Sit as far back as possible, supporting your vertebral column on the backrest (if possible, alter the height of the lumbar support).

Regulate the height of the seat to adopt a comfortable posture.

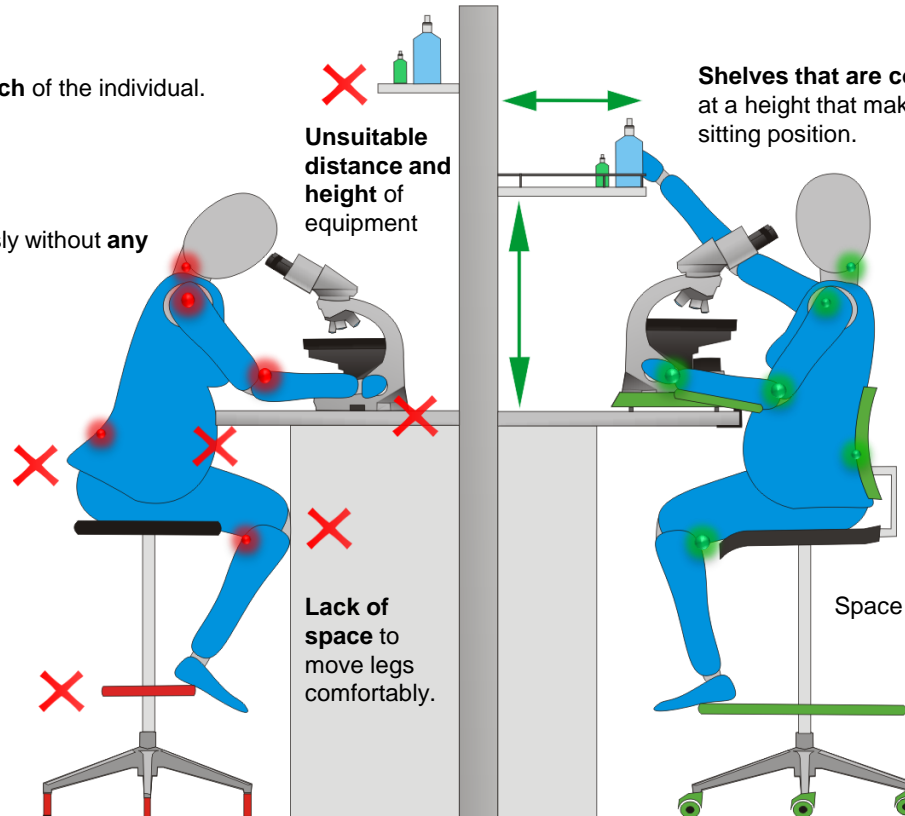
Footrest with too small a diameter. Forces the person to bend her legs too much.

Space under the table to move your legs freely.

The laboratory chair must have a footrest that is wider than the seat and its height must be adjustable.



Joints at risk



Joints protected

