

Top 10 Ergonomic Needs for the Aging

As the body matures, it changes. Some things begin to wear out while other things morph to a new form. Some of these changes require certain ergonomic considerations to continue to make things comfy and efficient for you as you travel into the golden years.

1. Bigger Buttons

As the hand matures it starts to lose sensitivity and control. Finger dexterity degrades. To reduce the need for pinpoint accuracy try bigger buttons. It is hard to miss when the target is bigger than the fingertip itself.

2. Bigger Handles

General loss of strength is another factor of aging. One area to lose more strength than others is your grip. Try switching to a bigger handle. A larger surface area to grab will allow you to maintain a strong grip. If the product you want doesn't come with big handles (like a fork or spoon or something like that) try wrapping it with foam/tape until it becomes a comfortable size.

3. Bigger screens

Eyesight also starts to weaken with age. To combat that problem give the eyes more information to process. Get a bigger screen or display. The larger the better. Now, this isn't an excuse to go buy that new 50 inch plasma screen. Who am I kidding? If it's a good enough excuse for you, then it's a good enough excuse for me.

4. Harder Surfaces

Again, the fingers start to lose sensitivity with age. So give the fingers more sensation. Get a harder surface or interface, or one with stronger feedback so you know that when you pressed it you really pressed it.

5. Louder Sounds

The hearing starts to go, too. So pump up the volume. If the device emits auditory cues make sure it emits them loud enough for you to hear. You might want to plan ahead and get a little extra volume for the years to come.

6. More Lights

Yep, the eyesight is still weakening. Give the ol' peepers more light to use. Raise the overall general lighting level and increase the use of task lights. Make sure the lights emit a full color spectrum to help maintain visual contrast.

7. More Handles

Every body needs a helping hand, urr, handle that is. Handles are great mobility aids and mobility, you guessed it, decreases with age. Stiff joints, sore muscles and lack of strength all contribute to mobility loss. Give your self some help by placing big, comfy handles wherever you might need a hand hold.

8. Lighter Objects

If you are not as strong as you were, then do not carry as much weight. Go for a lighter alternative when possible and ensure objects that are used on a daily basis, or need to be carried, are as light as can be.

9. Knobs to Levers

If a knob requires twisting turn it into a lever. With the reduction in grip strength you may be fighting an uphill battle to keep opening that door. Use physics to your advantage.

10. Double Your Prevention

As things degrade you will be more prone to developing repetitive stress and acute stress injuries. Redouble your efforts to prevent them. Follow proper ergonomic guidelines for task station setups and maintain good posture. Keep a healthy body and stretch. Stretch, stretch and then stretch some more. Stretching will help you in more ways than just ergonomically, so stretch.

Courtesy:

<http://ergonomics.about.com/od/ergonomicsfortheaging/tp/10ergoaging.htm>