

# Your Injury Prevention Checklist

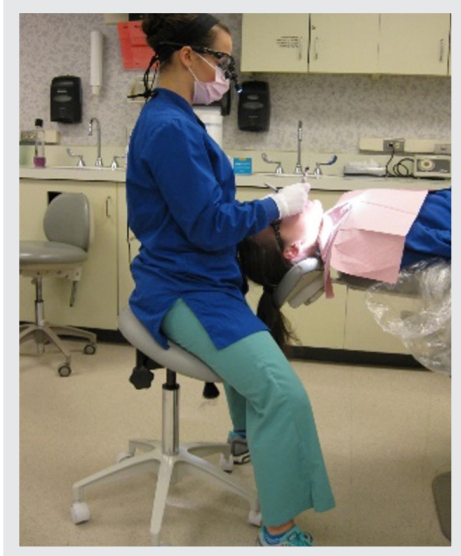
Use the following checklist to assess your working environment and positioning.



## Operatory Equipment

- operatory is set up for the dominant hand
- cords and hoses are long enough and positioned to limit stress on the body
- tray and suction attachments are within easy reach
- operator stool is appropriate for height and body type
- operator stool has properly adjusted lumbar support
- loupes and headlight are custom fitted
- computer screen and keyboard are positioned in your field of vision and accessible
- gloves fit comfortably

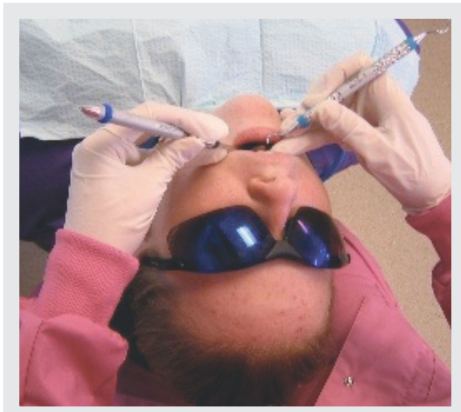
Reduce your risk of strain or injury even further by using a hybrid saddle stool or true saddle stool, or by investing in cordless handpieces.



## Body Ergonomics

To protect your arms, back, and neck, always sit as close to your client as possible and lean forward from the hips. Remember to maintain optimal clock position around your client's head during treatment.

- erect, balanced/neutral posture
- downward slope of the thighs (minimum of 35°)
- feet flat on the floor
- weight distributed evenly



## Hand Ergonomics

Hand fatigue and carpal tunnel syndrome are well-known professional hazards. To maintain a relaxed grasp while providing care, choose hand instruments with larger and varied handle diameters. Use ultrasonic devices to reduce hand fatigue.

- wrist in neutral position
- hand and wrist moving as a unit
- instruments gripped lightly
- instruments are sharp



## Client Position

Do not compromise your position for your client! While you may need to stand to treat pregnant clients or those with vertigo, these are exceptional cases. The client is in your chair for 45 minutes or so, while you must provide clinical care all day. Maintaining good posture is a priority.

- Recline the client's chair for good visibility.
- Ask the client to adjust their head, as needed.
- Adjust the headrest or have the client tilt their chin up or down, as needed.

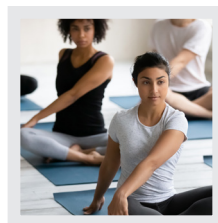
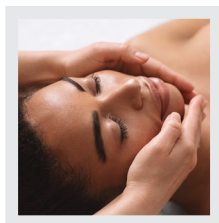
## Prevention is Key

A dental hygienist can have a long and rewarding career but staying healthy is key. Be mindful of your ergonomics at all times.

- Continually assess your position, your choice of instrument and equipment, your hand position during instrumentation, and your client's position.
- Incorporate stretches before the first appointment, at lunch, and at the end of the day.
- Stay hydrated and eat nutritious meals and snacks.
- Strive to be physically fit to lessen the strain of static positioning and repetitive movements used during instrumentation.
- Practise yoga to relax your mind and body. Avoid positions such as Downward Dog, which require you to support your body weight on extended wrists.
- Consult other health professionals (e.g., a massage therapist, physiotherapist or chiropractor) to help keep your body in good working order.
- Seek medical advice if you have an injury or unresolving pain.
- Discuss ergonomic concerns with your employer.

**Remember:** your mental health is just as important as your physical health.

For tips on managing stress, visit [cdha.ca/mentalhealth](https://www.cdha.ca/mentalhealth).



Regular assessment of your work environment and your own ergonomics, coupled with a commitment to healthy living, are steps you can take to enjoy a lengthy career in your chosen profession!