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Ergonomic Parenting: Best Ways to Prepare or Adapt Your Nursery

The months following the birth of a child are some of the most rewarding for new parents—and the most challenging to a new parent’s body. Here are some tips on how using proper body mechanics within an ergonomically friendly nursery can help ease the strains and stresses of parenting.

The Changing Table

Before placing the baby on the changing table, it is essential to keep him or her at the center of your body. Hold your baby at the front-center portion of the torso, rather than on the side at the hip. Holding the baby on the hip can damage your low back and pelvic area. Additionally, carrying an infant close to your body helps you keep your center of balance and reduces strain on your back.



The table should be at the appropriate height for parental use. When changing your baby's diaper, the best table placement and height is directly in front of and slightly below the elbows. This helps avoid the type of bending and twisting that can cause injury.

Other tips:

- Place all diaper-changing materials within arm’s reach—for instance, in wide-set drawers directly below the changing area.
- You may wish to place 1 leg on a stool when you are using the changing table. This can help take strain off your backs and necks.

Bending and Lifting

Parents can practice proper body mechanics by learning to bend and avoiding twisting when picking up their child.

When you are lifting your child from a crib or stroller, stand directly in front of the child to avoid twisting your back. It is important to bend from your hips rather than from your lower back, much like rising from a squatting position.

To return your child to the crib or stroller, use the same technique, and always remember to keep your child close to your chest. If the crib rail cannot be lowered, place a stepstool next to the crib and place 1 foot on the stool to reduce strain on your lower back as you bend and lift your child.

Acknowledgement: Marianne Ryan, PT, OCS



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