

Ergonomic Guide for Documentation and Charting




Implementing Ergonomic Principles and Tools to Enhance Caregiver Wellness

ergotron



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Introduction

The healthcare industry continues to work overtime to meet patients' needs. Overcrowded hospitals, long hours, and labor shortages have led to caregiver burnout, especially for nurses.

The critical nature of what these caregivers do can't be underestimated. **But on top of current shortages nationwide, research shows nurses at all levels experience chronic stress, driving many to consider quitting the profession altogether.**

By 2025, U.S. healthcare institutions will experience nursing assistant and practitioner shortages of 125,000. Shortages associated with increases in a nurse's substantial workload are already contributing to a negative work experience.



95% of hospital nurses have reported **work burnout** in the last three years.



31% noted that burnout has made them **consider quitting** in the last three years.

What nurses report as the reason for burnout:



80% report **low staffing** in their facility.



76% report **emotional exhaustion**.



75% report **high workload** demands.



55% report **physical exhaustion**.

Source: [2021 Nursing CE Central survey](#)

Burnout even holds a place in what the [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#) champions as the quintuple aim for advancing healthcare.

THE QUINTUPLE AIM A FIVE-PART APPROACH TO ADVANCING HEALTHCARE



While healthcare organizations can't fix every facet of caregiver burnout, they can at least take steps toward solving part of the problem.

But where does the industry start? How do leaders support nurses by promoting their physical and mental health in the workplace? And how do they ensure a satisfied workforce in one of the most required—and overworked—professions?

One solution is to change the way caregivers perform their duties and to provide better tools for their jobs. Giving nurses the correct equipment to aid in their most time-consuming responsibilities by providing a more comfortable, physically safe work environment can make a vast improvement during a shift.

Our own Ergotron survey shows that providing ergonomic tools and equipment, like height-adjustable medical carts and wall-mounted workstations, can help reduce physical pain points and create more efficient workflows. Mobile or fixed workstations can contribute to smoother, faster and more comfortable experiences for critical caregivers.

This eBook is a guide for healthcare leaders to implement ergonomic solutions and tools for a key workflow: documentation and charting. Armed with statistics, surveys, and suggestions for equipment, healthcare decision-makers can use this guide to support their nurses with the right products for charting to help reduce burnout and improve well-being.



Ergonomics, Efficiency and Ease

Comfort on the job starts with [ergonomics](#): the science of designing the job to fit the worker and not the other way around, taking into account the furniture and equipment in the working environment. Three key elements must come together for ergonomic working, which we call the [Ergonomic Equation™](#). It explains how neutral posture, voluntary motion and rest time add up to working comfortably.

ERGONOMIC EQUATION

HOW ERGONOMICS ADDS UP TO WORKING COMFORTABLY

Computing comfort starts with paying attention to your body's experience.
Just three basic elements define the Ergonomic Equation:



Neutral Posture



Voluntary Motion



Rest Time

In a physically demanding job like nursing, [ergonomics becomes even more critical to the work experience](#). Manual patient handling, long shifts, hours spent standing, and challenging work environments can lead to cumulative trauma disorders (CTDs) like carpal tunnel syndrome, lower back pain, and other musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Daily nursing work runs all these risks. **Almost half of the nurses Ergotron surveyed reported discomfort while performing charting duties**, including back pain (experienced by 52% of nurses), exhaustion (38%) and sore necks (33%). This physical discomfort or pain can distract nurses and impact the care they provide.

But an ergonomic environment and tools can help mitigate these risk factors and help increase efficiency and satisfaction on the job. Ergonomic improvements can include customizing both wall-mounted and mobile workstation desk heights for each worker, setting proper monitor viewing heights and distances from the viewer, and upgrading older workstations that aren't designed to accommodate computer use.

Choosing and adapting the right equipment and workstations, and implementing workstyle changes that follow the Ergonomic Equation, can help decrease a nurse's physical stress, reducing the chance of injury and mental toll on the job.



Identifying the Documentation Pain Points

Healthcare organizations can improve the nursing experience by tackling the most time-consuming part of their shift: charting and documentation. According to a [survey by Medscape](#), administrative tasks can add up to three hours to a nurse's 12-hour shift. Equipment that provides efficiency and comfort can help prevent injury and free up time from tedious, yet necessary tasks to care for patients.

Nurses themselves agree, with **95% of healthcare providers surveyed by Ergotron stating that having better, more ergonomic equipment could improve their health and well-being**. By improving this workflow with ergonomic principles and equipment that address top documentation pain points, healthcare leaders can help enhance nurses' physical and mental health.

DOCUMENTATION PAIN POINTS FOR NURSES



Inefficient workflows



Limited access to supplies and technology



Staff shortages and long hours of charting



Poorly designed equipment



INEFFICIENT WORKFLOWS

Documentation at the point of care can help decrease inefficiencies, reduce the number of errors made, and allow the nurse to stay by a patient's bedside rather than leaving the room to complete a chart, according to a survey by [Medscape](#).

But current hospital designs and workstations don't always support that type of workflow. Centralized charting and documentation stations outside the patient room impede a nurse's ability to communicate with patients or keep them within their line of sight for monitoring. **A study by AMN Healthcare found only 21% of nurses surveyed reported doing their charting work in the room with the patient.** Many hospitals aren't equipped with workstations in the patient's room or mobile solutions, requiring a nurse to visit a centralized nursing station to perform those duties.

This breaks the communication between patient and nurse while contributing to an increased likelihood of errors. Even workstations within a room may disrupt the sightline between the caregiver and patient if they aren't adjustable or mobile.

Ergonomic workstations at the point of care can help solve for these pain points. Easily adjustable workstations allow a nurse to sit or stand depending on their comfort and how they want to interact with the patient. Screens that can be repositioned give nurses the opportunity to look patients in the eye as they communicate while still having easy access to documentation. Thoughtfully designed wall-mounted or mobile workstations in the patient room enable more nurse-patient interactions and efficient workflows.

SELECT ERGONOMIC WORKSTATIONS THAT:



Can accommodate documentation and charting workflows with ease



Enable fast, easy and safe interactions with critical technology



Give convenient, intuitive access to supplies and peripheral equipment

Ergotron's [CareFit™ Combo Wall Workstation](#) provides a comfortable, patient-centered documentation experience at the point of care. With a panning feature that lets a nurse move or reposition the screen, caregivers can easily share information with patients and maintain eye contact while charting. Intuitive access to tools supports efficient workflows with a one-hand stow feature that opens up more space to provide care when not in use.



CAREFIT COMBO WALL WORKSTATION

Supports nurse-patient connections, caregiver comfort and uptime by enabling efficient documentation at the point of care.

- Flexible workflows
- Comfortable documentation
- Neat workspace
- Supports uptime
- Warm aesthetic
- Quality construction

LIMITED ACCESS TO SUPPLIES AND TECHNOLOGY

Access to supplies and technology is critical to a nurse's ability to provide the best patient care. But many nurses today struggle to efficiently locate what they need at the right time or complete documentation at an available workstation. This means multiple trips to nursing stations or supply areas, which takes time and energy away from direct patient care.

Choosing workstations with drawers will keep extra supplies and items within reach. To support efficient workflows, organizations should apply the [principles of ergonomic zones](#) to documentation workstations to ensure technology that's used the most stays closest to the caregiver. Using the primary work zone for items used most often can help reduce stress on the body and enhance productivity with easy access.

When trialing mobile medical carts or height-adjustable wall workstations, check to see if the technology and accessories are intuitive to access and allow the user to maintain a neutral standing or sitting position—one of the principles of ergonomics. Additionally, organizations should consider whether a wall-mounted workstation or a mobile cart may be more appropriate for the hospital's design.

Mobile medical carts are a helpful tool for improving how caregivers complete their work while supporting the essential technology they use. These workstations travel with the nurse to help reduce extra trips, keep supplies easily located and move documentation to the patient room to support personal connections.

ERGOTRON'S MEDICAL CART FINDER CAN HELP ORGANIZATIONS DETERMINE THE BEST MOBILE MEDICAL CARTS FOR THEIR WORKFLOWS AND ENVIRONMENT

“We've learned from nurses that workstations are critical to enabling them to do their job. The ease with which they can maneuver or adjust the workstation, access key accessories and supplies comfortably, and have a worksurface with enough space adds up to less strain on their bodies, lower frustration, and results in higher job satisfaction.”

JESSICA GRENWIS

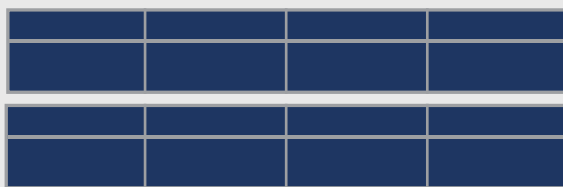
ERGOTRON'S DIRECTOR OF SEGMENT MARKETING – HEALTHCARE

Ergotron's [CareFit Pro Medical Cart with Drawers](#) gives nurses the space for everything they need in a flexible design that can adapt to changing needs and workflows. Effortless sit-to-stand adjustment and reliable battery power make this mobile workstation a popular choice for nurses and IT professionals alike. With CareFit Pro on the floor, time spent on separate trips to find supplies or complete charts can instead be spent on a nurse's most important job: patient care.

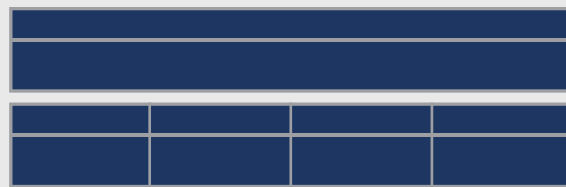
CUSTOMIZABLE DRAWER STORAGE

The [CareFit Pro Medical Cart](#) offers preconfigured set-ups, in addition to customizable storage options to fit your workflows.

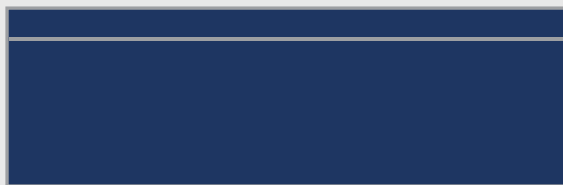
Preconfigured carts with drawers:



8 DRAWERS (4X2)



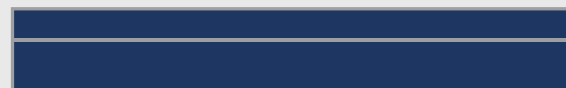
5 DRAWERS (4X1+1)



1 TALL DRAWER (1X1)



2 DRAWERS (2X1)



1 DRAWER (1X1)

Customizable drawer options:



1 TALL DRAWER (1X1)



1 DRAWER (4X1+1)



5 DRAWERS (1X1)



2 DRAWER (2X1)



1 DRAWER (1X1)

STAFF SHORTAGES AND LONG HOURS OF CHARTING

Healthcare providers face a unique double-headed demand as they juggle creating an efficient, safe working environment while managing large patient caseloads. A [nursing shortage report](#) noted that the current loss of nurses is primarily caused by early retirements and professionals leaving the field, driving an even more significant caseload that can lead to burnout and increased errors.

To address this, nurses and caregivers may spend hours of overtime charting or completing administrative tasks they may not have time for while providing care. Already a large part of a nurse's workday, charting and documentation becomes even more cumbersome when the number of patients under a nurse's care increases. Alongside long shifts, these factors cause an increased mental load that contributes to burnout, resignation and errors on the job.

Ergonomics can pave the way for nurses to complete their work more efficiently, allowing for a reduced mental load. By intuitively placing technology and equipment, hospitals can prevent physical blocks and help nurses move more quickly from patient to patient or location to location while focusing on their patients.

With many nurses taking on extra shifts in different care areas or organizations hiring traveling nurses to address shortages, it's critical to invest in equipment that easily adapts to each workflow and user. Look for height-adjustable wall or mobile workstations that intuitively adjust to fit individual ergonomic needs. This includes height and positioning to keep caregivers of all statures the ability to create a comfortable workspace for how they work best.

Ergotron's patented [Constant Force™ technology](#) allows for effortless movement, which promotes individual ergonomic adjustments that help minimize aches and pains that are often associated with documentation. Many Ergotron solutions include this industry-leading technology, like the [StyleView® Cart with LCD Pivot](#).

StyleView medical carts are also compatible with various drawers and accessories to meet the needs of different workflows and users. When selecting documentation workstations, look for options like StyleView medical carts that provide customizable features and multiple accessory installation locations for application-specific use.



STYLEVIEW® CART WITH LCD PIVOT

- Innovative and easy to maneuver
- Sit-to-stand height adjustment
- Independent screen positioning
- Adjustable back-tilt keyboard tray

POORLY DESIGNED EQUIPMENT

In addition to quality wall-mounted solutions like Ergotron's [CareFit Combo System](#), many healthcare organizations choose to also offer mobile medical carts for documentation. Yet many mobile workstations today can't move easily between all the different rooms nurses visit throughout their shifts. Large, bulky carts both take up space and are heavy to move, meaning nurses are more likely not to use them, or to sustain injuries from moving around these inconvenient workstations.

Ergonomic mobile solutions, on the other hand, are intuitive to use and to move wherever they're needed. Nurses can bring these workstations from room to room with features such as handles and adjustable settings from sitting to standing to adapt to any situation, task or room. Ergonomic, height-adjustable medical carts can help keep nurses of varying heights as comfortable and physically supported as possible while accomplishing their tasks.

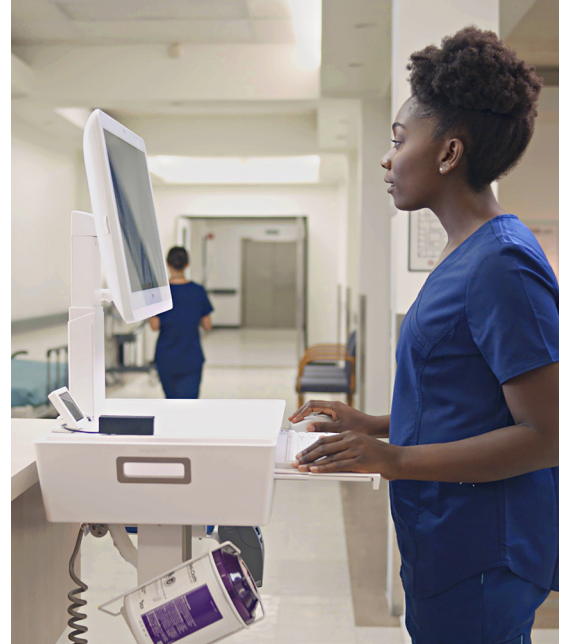


Given that nurses spend a large amount of time, often after their shift ends, to finish charting, we know they value solutions that allow them to do this where they can focus on their task uninterrupted. Charting requires accuracy and efficiency; providing flexibility in workstations to help them do this important part of their job gives them choice.”

JESSICA GRENWIS

When selecting a mobile medical cart, ensure it can quickly move between rooms and floors and fit into tight spaces. Poorly designed carts may not move easily or safely through a crowded healthcare setting, resulting in traffic jams, lengthy trips, or even accidents. This reduces the time nurses can spend administering care to patients and increases the time it takes to move between those under their supervision.

Look for mobile medical carts with compact footprints and high-quality casters for ultimate mobility. Check that the product has undergone rigorous testing to ensure it can safely accommodate your equipment, especially while in motion, and adjust to fit a broad range of nurses.



Ergotron offers a wide variety of mobile medical carts, including options with a small footprint to easily fit next to a patient's bedside or even a crowded hallway. Products such as the [CareFit Slim 2.0 LCD Cart](#) are adaptable and easy to move throughout a hospital's different rooms and zones. It adjusts to fit users of different heights and accommodates large all-in-one computers for comfortable documentation from anywhere.



CAREFIT SLIM 2.0 LCD CART

- Expansive height range that adjusts to each user's needs
- Lean, compact frame that's easy to move all-in-one computers and monitors up to 20 lbs.
- Large portfolio of accessories allows customization
- Multiple drawer options

How to Select the Right Ergonomic Workstations for Your Organization

When evaluating new workstations whether wall-mounted solutions fixed in patient rooms or mobile carts that can travel with the caregiver, **keep ergonomics, flexibility, and quality top of mind.**

Assess how easy it is to adjust or move each workstation, intuitively access key accessories and supplies, and if there's enough workspace to complete tasks. This helps ensure less strain on their bodies, lower frustration, and more job satisfaction.

Determine if the workstation is modular and can work with a variety of accessories. With a flexible design, the right ergonomic workstation can evolve with your organization's needs to make the most of your investment. Ensure the solution integrates well with the built environment or if mobile, can easily fit in tight spaces like patient rooms. With infection control remaining a top priority, workstations should also be easy to clean during shifts and between patients.

Nurses want to be confident that their workstations will reliably function during their shifts so they can focus on patient care. That requires an investment in quality designs that can withstand the rigors of daily use in fast-paced healthcare environments. Consider the length of warranty and the service and support offered from implementation and beyond.

KEY ERGONOMIC EQUIPMENT FEATURES



Workstations that maintain sightlines with patients



Panning features for screens to be easily repositioned



Human-centered designs that are intuitive to use



Available drawers and accessories to fit specific workflows



Compact footprints and quality casters for mobility



INSIGHTS FOR HEALTHCARE LEADERS

of caregivers and 59% of IT staff believe improvement is required to ensure that caregivers have the appropriate equipment to do their job well

believe caregivers should have more of a voice when it comes to selecting ergonomic equipment and new technology at their organization

THIS IS EVEN MORE LIKELY FOR CAREGIVERS IN LARGE ORGANIZATIONS (78%)

Source: Ergotron eBook: [Caring for Healthcare Workers](#)

To determine if a healthcare workstation will fit your specific users and their workflow, set one up in a patient room to test. Some manufacturers also offer clinical showrooms to experience their solutions. This is the best way for nurses and IT leaders to try the product and understand if it meets your criteria and adapts to your specific workflows.

FIND THE RIGHT SOLUTION WITH ERGOTRON

As the healthcare workflow experts, we offer multiple options to ensure you select the right solutions for your organization:



Access to our [clinical showroom](#) for in-person or virtual demos



Complimentary trials to experience products within your own environment



A [medical cart finder](#) to help you identify the best solution for your workflows



[Installation and integration services](#) to train you and your employees on how to use our equipment

Conclusion

In a post-COVID world, hospitals and healthcare institutions must contend with a critical but overworked employee base whose work directly impacts patient lives. Long hours, cumbersome technology, and the physical and mental toll of the job are all problems that nurses and healthcare providers face every day—all of which contribute to growing burnout rates. Despite this, there are ways to mitigate these challenges.

Ergonomic documentation workstations can help solve key pain points in this critical profession.

Implementing ergonomic equipment is an important step in caring for nurses and mitigating burnout. Access to the right tools can help increase documentation efficiency, comfort, and overall satisfaction. This, in turn, allows nurses to form personal connections with patients and provide the quality care that they aspire to give amid the demands of their busy profession.

As organizations operate on the other side of a global pandemic, now is the time for healthcare leaders to examine their tools, equipment and practices to help alleviate the reasons nurses crash and burn or even quit. Ensuring this critical group continues providing exceptional care while staying satisfied benefits everyone.

ABOUT ERGOTRON

Ergotron, Inc. is a global company focused on improving how people work, learn, play and care for others. Using human-centered design principles and the Technology of Movement™, Ergotron builds products and custom solutions that help people thrive in healthcare, education and contract furniture environments, and in office settings, both at home and on-site.

Through its 40-year history, Ergotron has served as an innovative industry leader known for professional-grade products and customer-obsessed service. The company has earned more than 200 patents and established a growing portfolio of award-winning brands including WorkFit®, CareFit™, LearnFit® and JÜV™. Ergotron is headquartered in St. Paul, Minnesota, with a presence in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific. For more information, please visit www.ergotron.com.