

Ergonomic Injury Prevention: Interventions for Hotel Housekeepers

UNITE HERE International
UNITE HERE Local 11

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Background

Hotel housekeepers are two times more likely to be injured on the job than all other service sector workers.

- Injury rate for service sector workers is 3.5¹
- Injury rate for housekeeping is 7.87²
- 40% of housekeeper injuries are musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)²



Hazards of Cart Pushing

A major cause of housekeeper injuries is the use of manually pushed carts.

- Carts weigh up to 400 lbs
- Require great deal of force to push (25-50 lbs)³
- Cause stress on worker's soft tissue
- Maneuvering requires lots of pushing and pulling
- Push distances can be very long
- Carts are pushed from room to room for up to 8 hours



Objectives and Methods

Our goals were to:

- Document existing interventions for injury reduction
- Obtain input from housekeepers, vendors, and employers on the use of motorized carts



We achieved this through:

- Research
- House visits
- Shadowing
- Interviews



Results

Housekeepers currently using motorized carts reported:

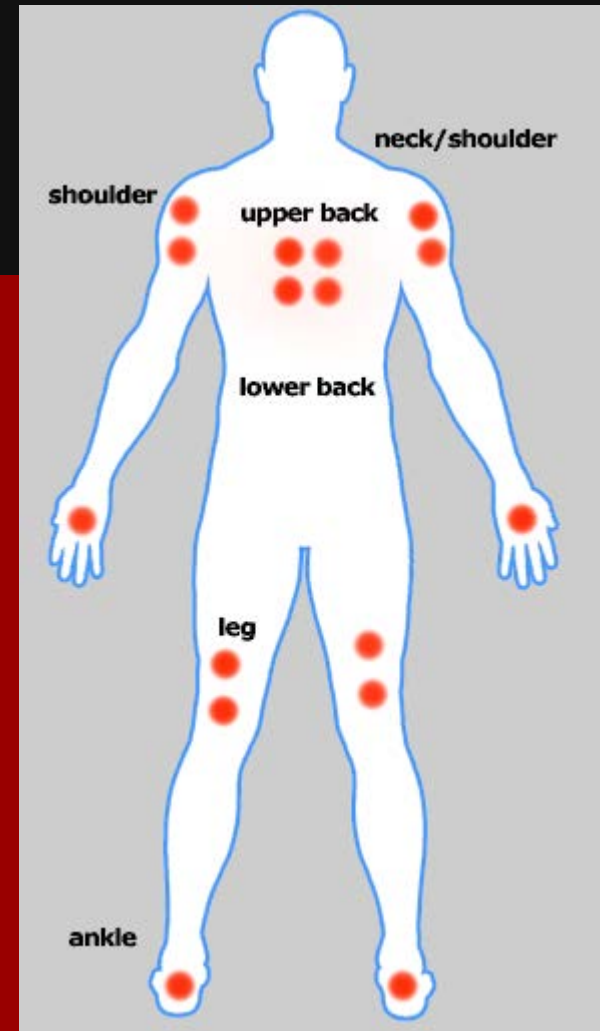
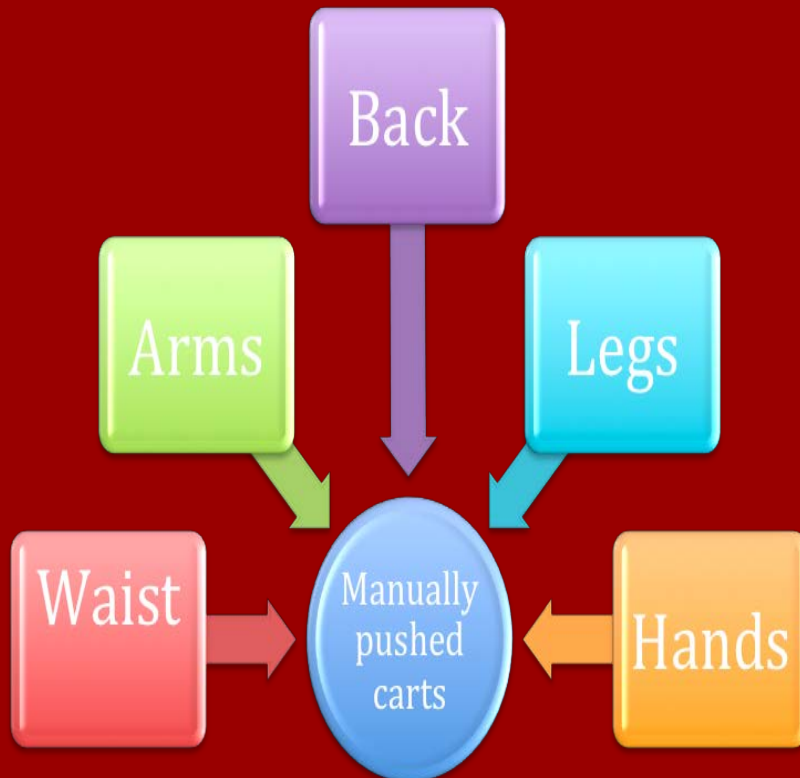
- No current pain (4/4)
- Previously experienced pain from manual carts (4/4)

Housekeepers without motorized carts reported:

- Current pain from manual carts (4/4)
- Belief that motorized carts could make their job easier (4/4)



Results



Motorized carts reduce the pressure on worker's soft tissue and could potentially decrease the high rate of MSDs.



Manual



Motorized

Vendor's Perspective

Hostar is a leading motorized cart vendor. From them, we found:

- Very few hotels use motorized carts
- Their carts are mostly found in Las Vegas and Orlando
- They are recommended for hotels where service closet is more than 25 rooms from the last guest room
- They are easily maintained and don't present many challenges
- Their return on investment has not been calculated
- Cost is the biggest issue for hotels

Worker's Stories

Margarita and Maria, non-union hotel workers

- Housekeepers that were both injured on the job
- Were refused light duty
- Have been out of work for over a year
- Struggling to pay for rent, bills, and food
- Margarita underwent surgery to repair a torn tendon

Both felt motorized carts could have prevent their injuries.



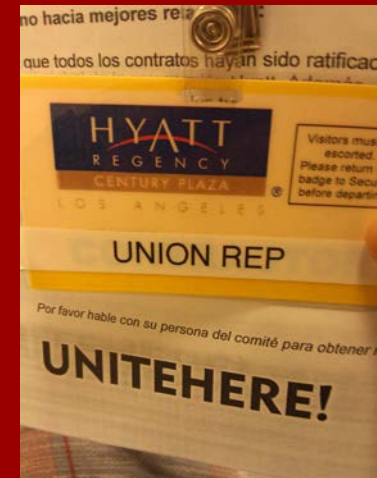
Challenges

- Limited academic work on carts
 - Benefits of motorized carts
 - Specific detriments of manual carts
- Limited access to workers and management
- Worker's difficulty associating pain with specific risk factors

Successes

- Conducted 10 house visits
- Performed 8 worker interviews
- Performed 1 vendor interview of a Hostar executive
- Shadowed workers at 2 hotels
- Witnessed organizing victories

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Recommendations

- Conduct quantitative studies on the impact of motorized carts on...
 - Injury rates
 - Worker's comp claims
 - Efficiency
 - Work atmosphere
- Continue to educate workers on how to identify work-related pain

Reflections

“No one should have to be injured or killed for a paycheck.” -OSHA

“Even though we don’t want to, we get injured.”
-Morena Hernandez



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Housekeepers