



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Canadian Centre for Rural  
and Agricultural Health

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# Farming, Shoulder Pain, and Movement

A new study looked at shoulder pain and its effect on movement during common farm work tasks.

**42 farmers participated in this study**

23 had no shoulder pain

19 did have shoulder pain



The research team analyzed shoulder blade and arm movements of farmers and farm workers when performing four common tasks:

## 1. Overhead Drill



## 2. Lifting & Pouring a Seed Bag



## 3. Climbing a Seed Cart



## 4. Shoveling



## What did we find?

- Shoulder pain caused movement changes of the shoulder blade and arm in 3 of the 4 tasks measured.
- **Risk factors for shoulder injuries exist in many aspects of farm work.**



*This research is supported with funds from WorkSafeBC. The views, findings, opinions and conclusions expressed herein do not represent the views of WorkSafeBC.*

# What can you do about it?

## 1 BE MINDFUL OF YOUR BODY POSITION

When doing work involving your arms or hands, avoid bending or stooping as this requires more reaching & lifting of the arms and shoulders.

- Consider using a squat or kneeling position instead.

This could also help avoid back pain!



Squat position | Kneel position



Image Source: MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario

## 2 KEEP YOUR ELBOWS TUCKED

When working with your hands (lifting, repairing, etc), keep your elbows tucked into your body.

- Avoid a “chicken wing” position when possible.

Reducing the weight or load in your hands can help with this adjustment.

## 3 SET YOUR SHOULDER BLADES

Before starting work, try to “set” your shoulder blades to begin your work from a strong position.

- Pull your shoulder blades back and down (away from your ears) and return to this position as needed throughout your work.

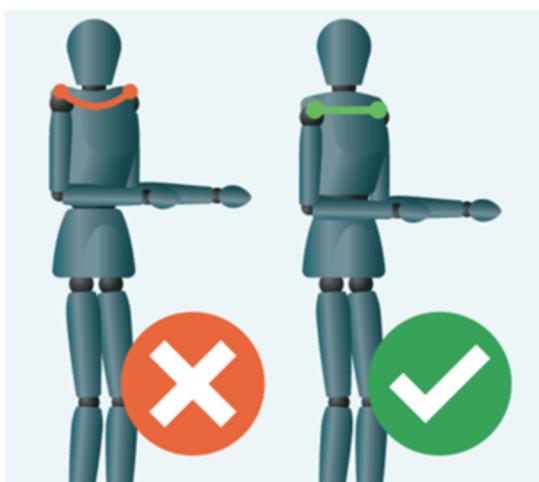


Image Source: MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario

**Seek treatment (doctor, physical therapist) at early signs of shoulder pain!**