

## Ergonomics plays role in tools

Drop into any hardware store or home improvement center, and you're likely to find aisles full of tools labeled "ergonomic." But what exactly does that mean? Simply put, ergonomics is the science of designing and producing tools, furniture and other work-related implements that improve a worker's efficiency while reducing discomfort, fatigue, and risk of injury.

"Ergonomically enhanced tools can include helpful features like angled handles, padded handgrips and non-slip coatings. However, no matter how impressive a tool's design is, it's almost impossible for it to be universally ergonomic since human physiques and project applications vary greatly from one to the next," notes Paul Holstein, chief operating officer of CableOrganizer.com.

To make the decision process a little easier, he offers these guidelines for choosing the right tools:

- Avoid using tools whose handles have built-in finger grooves. When fingers don't naturally align with grooves, excessive pressure from the raised groove edges can cause discomfort and injury.

- Choose tools with handles that are covered in a soft material, like foam or flexible plastic. Cushioned handles are not only comfortable for long hours of use, but they provide a much firmer grip and cut down on slippage.

- When selecting double-handed gripping and cutting tools, opt for ones with spring-loaded handles that will automatically return to the open position.

