A hand tool that is well made is easy to recognize. The size feels right as you hold it in your hand. It has a comfortable grip and weight with proper balance and fit. There’s also a right way to use a hand tool that may require certain movements or pressures and specific angles or positions for the tool to perform most efficiently.

Keep in mind that the best tool is one that:

- suits the job you’re doing.
- fits your hand.
- reduces the force you need to apply.
- can be used in a comfortable position.
- fits the work space available.

Every tool has a set purpose. Using it for something other than its intended purpose will likely damage the tool and could cause you pain, discomfort and result in an injury. Whenever possible, choose ergonomic tools that are made for the task and fit the hand without causing awkward or uncomfortable postures, harmful contact pressures, or other health and safety risks. Evaluate the workspace and pick the tool that allows you to work comfortably in the space available.

Awkward postures make more demands on your body. The right tool will help you to minimize pain and fatigue by keeping your body in a “neutral” position with your neck, shoulders, and back relaxed and arms at your sides.
When choosing a hand tool, ask yourself these questions:

- Is the tool handle without sharp edges or finger grooves?
- Is the tool handle coated with soft material?
- Can the tool be used while keeping your wrist straight?
- Can the tool be used with your dominant hand or with either hand?
- Does the tool handle have a non-slip surface?
- For double-handle tools, is the handle spring-loaded?

Exposure to awkward postures or harmful contact pressures may contribute to an injury over time. Reduce the risk of this happening by selecting the tools that fit your hand and the right tools for the job.

How do you know if you have a problem?

You may have a problem if you have any of these symptoms:

- Tingling
- Continual muscle fatigue
- Swelling in the joints
- Sore muscles
- Decreased ability to move
- Numbness
- Decreased grip strength
- Change in the skin color of your hands
- Pain from movement pressure or exposure to cold or vibration