

Forklift Ergonomics 1: Driving's Impact

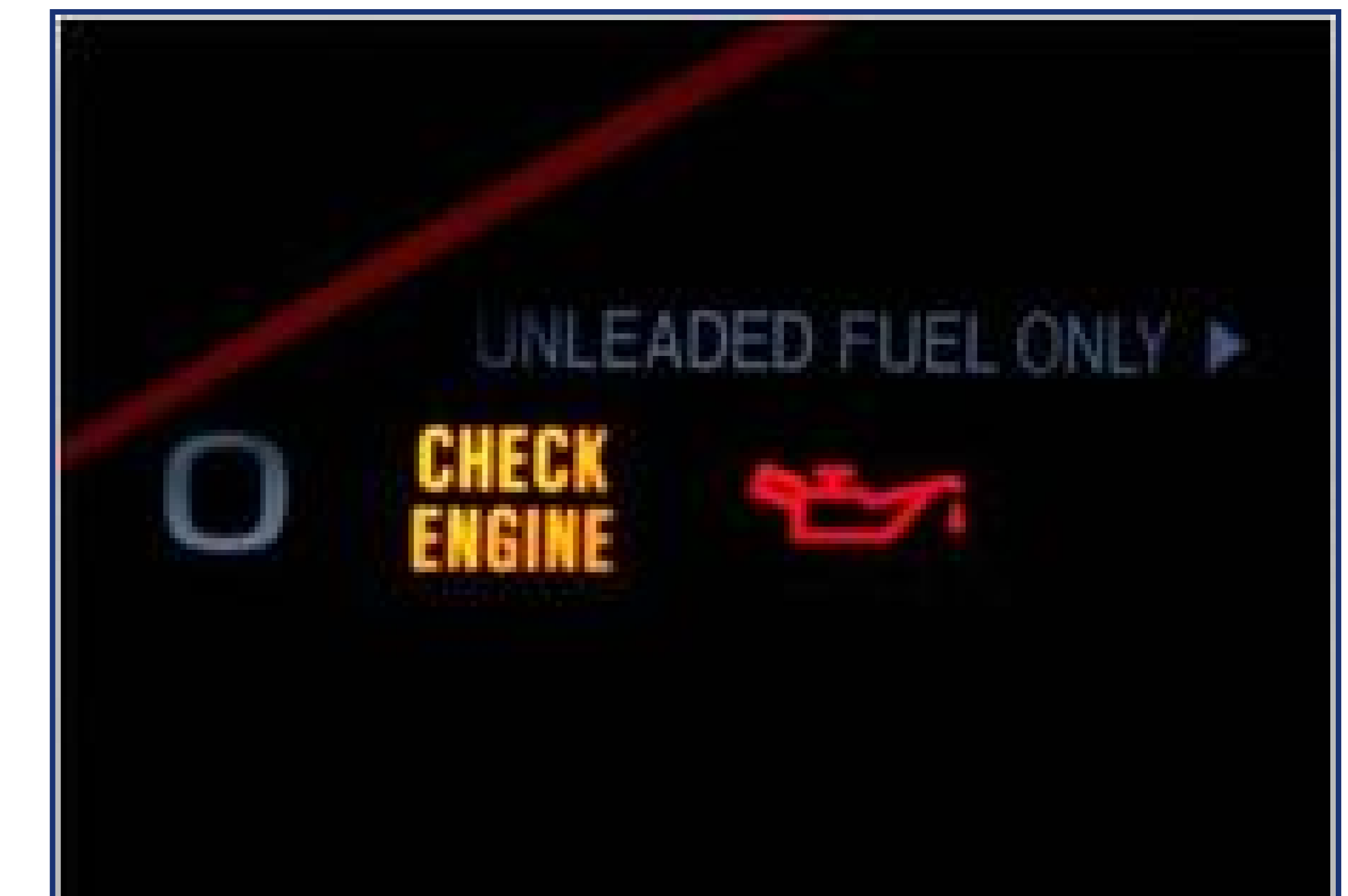
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Most of us don't think that sitting in a moving vehicle would be hazardous to our health but think...

- After a long drive on your vacation – are you stiff as soon as you get out of the car?
- Are your neck and shoulders stiff and sore after long drives?
- Do you find yourself exhausted after driving down the road all day?

It's important to accept that the awkward postures, vibration and repetitive nature of forklift driving can easily result in the development of musculoskeletal symptoms. Forklift drivers most commonly experience the early signs and symptoms of musculoskeletal injury in the neck, shoulders, upper and lower back and the forearms. Left unchecked, these can progress to the point of severe pain, reduced movement and eventually the inability to work or play (e.g. tennis elbow, sciatica or disc injuries).

Why is it that when a warning light comes on in your forklift, you will immediately pick up the phone and call your mechanic but won't do the same when your warning lights come on? Discomfort, pain, numbness, tingling, and reduced movement are some of our body's warning lights. Putting your hand up early and getting help on (supervisor, safety) or off the job (family physician, physical therapist), will help ensure that your symptoms are temporary and that your wheels will keep on turning for years to come.



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written by ErgoRisk