

Monotony: The Characteristic of Many Women's Professions **(1930)**

Abstract

This 1930 film, whose title translates to “Monotony: The characteristic of many women’s professions,” advised female workers on how to avoid the repetitive-motion injuries associated with the endless sorting, assembling, lifting, and typing that so many of their jobs entailed. Footage showed women working at a toothpaste factory in Dresden, for instance, sorting rags, hauling and lifting milk cans, and separating tobacco leaves. The film pointed out what the women themselves could do to prevent long-term health consequences, but it also emphasized the importance of factory infrastructure, such as ventilation and dust filters, over which the female employees likely had very little influence at all. The filmmakers strongly recommended mechanical dust-extraction systems to prevent lung irritations and diseases, for instance, especially inside the plants where women sorted old clothes for recycling, a procedure that often released particulates and bacteria. Few laws or regulations existed to enforce the installation of such systems, however, nor did most employees have access to the masks and gloves that would help protect them when working with highly toxic substances, such as lead. At the same time, the film offered women some advice on how to prevent stress and strain on their bodies, including guidance on stretching, exercising, adjusting one’s seated position, and simply spending more time outdoors. The producer of this film, a Dresden-based film company run by Fritz Boehner, specialized in such educational films. Many of them focused on health and drew from the robust “social hygiene movement” of the early twentieth century, when a whole series of reformers, physicians, and gurus encouraged “rational” diets and health regimens as a necessary antidote to the ill effects of modern lifestyles. Dresden’s famous Hygiene Museum may have assisted with the film’s production, too, given that it hosted its second International Hygiene Exhibition later that same year and had its own department for producing educational materials in a number of different formats. That second exhibition also devoted a section to the topic of “Women, Family and Work” [*Die Frau in Familie und Beruf*], building on the research and interests of the its scientific director, Dr. Marta Fraenkel.

Source

Intertitle: The machine sets the pace.

Intertitle: The pace of work is determined by the conveyor belt and group piecework.

Intertitle: The pace of work is determined by the desire to earn money (piecework).

Intertitle: Intensive work means: heavy strain on the sensory organs, heavy strain on the nerves, heavy strain on individual muscle groups.

Intertitle: Therefore: Adequate breaks and good recreational opportunities at the workplace.

Intertitle: Sufficient leisure time and proper use of it.

Intertitle: Unbalanced posture at work

Intertitle: Women's jobs are often associated with a monotonous physical posture during work.

Intertitle: Sitting

Intertitle: A poor sitting posture compresses the chest and abdominal organs and can cause physical damage.

Intertitle: Avoid a monotonous posture by:

Intertitle: Using a chair with a forward-leaning backrest,

Intertitle: a notepad holder

Intertitle: proper desk height

Intertitle: This is the correct sitting posture.
Intertitle: Standing
Intertitle: Standing for long periods tires the feet. So get rid of unsuitable shoes.
Intertitle: The damage is inevitable: flat feet, varicose veins.
Intertitle: The law requires that sales staff be provided with seating at their workplace
Intertitle: Recliners provided at department stores
Intertitle: Corrective exercises to counteract an unbalanced posture led by a gymnastics teacher
Intertitle: Lifting and carrying loads
Intertitle: Conscious utilization of one's strength protects against injury
Intertitle: Not like this...[image of wrong posture]
Intertitle: but like this! [image of correct posture]
Intertitle: Transport heavy loads mechanically!
Intertitle: Harmful effects caused by working material, especially dust and toxins
Intertitle: Sorting rags
Intertitle: Pulling tobacco leaves
Intertitle: Dust has a damaging effect on the respiratory organs.
Intertitle: Dust can also contain infectious germs
Intertitle: Protective measures are required, e.g. dust extraction
Intertitle: Rag sorting facility - pneumatic dust extraction - extractor - exhaust - separator - dust collector
Intertitle: Personal hygiene is very important
Intertitle: Not like this [cramped, dirty break room]
Intertitle: But a clean break room!
Intertitle: Shower facilities!
Intertitle: Working with lead dust can lead to typical female injuries.
Intertitle: Protective measures: effective dust extraction, personal cleanliness
Intertitle: Clean work coats outside your home!
Intertitle: Toxins
Intertitle: Modern production methods can pose dangers, for example when using fat-dissolving substance (benzene, amyl acetate, etc.)
Intertitle: Working without protection causes severe fatigue and affects your overall well-being, so remember: good ventilation and work carefully!

Source: *Einförmigkeit: Das Merkmal vieler Frauenberufe*, prod. Bohner-Film, 1930. Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv, Filmwerk ID: 744. <https://digitaler-lesesaal.bundesarchiv.de/video/744/637873>

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