5S Waste Walk

Make one real task easier and improve the next handoff.

Worked example: one parts kit, one bench, one walk.

Task and people

Name the task, area, date, person doing it and person walking with them.

Task: Pack a standard parts kit. Area: packing bench. Date: 14 Oct 2026.
Person doing the task: Sam. Walking with them: Lee.

Next customer

Who gets the work next? What do they need to use it without fixing or asking?

Dana at final inspection needs a complete kit with its ID facing them, so the kit can be checked and moved on without extra handling.

Seen or heard

Look for searching, reaching, waiting, rework or overburden. Record facts, counts or time.

The bench was clean; tools and bins were labeled. We watched 5 kits. Sam reached across the bench to place all 5 in the marked handoff zone. Dana turned 4 of 5 kits to read the ID. Sam said the far reach was awkward.
No searching, waiting or correction of kit contents was observed in this sample.

Possible reason to check

Keep guesses separate from what you saw. Ask the person doing the work.

The handoff location may cause the reaches and turns. Other kit sizes have not been checked. That is our guess. The test will tell us.

One small test

Choose one change with the people affected. Make it safe and easy to undo.

Sam and Dana agree to try a nearer handoff box, marked with removable tape and an arrow showing which way the ID faces. Try the next 5 matching kits. Keep safe access, lifting limits and required inspection unchanged.
Remove the tape and return to the old location if the trial does not help.

Owner and check time

Who will try it? When will both people check? What would make us stop?

Sam sets up the trial with Dana. Lee checks after 5 kits with both people.
Stop if the location obstructs access, increases strain or causes a quality issue.

Did it help both people

Compare similar work before and after. Check effort, delays, quality and any new burden.

Person doing the task

Before: 5 of 5 kits needed a far reach.
After: 0 of 5. Sam said the reach felt easier. No new waiting was observed.

Next customer

Before: Dana turned 4 of 5 kits.
After: 0 of 5. All 5 IDs were visible; no added handling or rework observed.

Keep adjust or undo

Decide together. Record the next step, owner and date. Keep only what helps.

Keep for the next batch. Sam checks again with Dana at 10:00, including a larger kit. Five kits is a start, not proof. Try a big kit before you call it done.
Adjust or undo it if either person is worse off.

5S prompts: remove what is not needed; put needed items within safe reach; make problems visible; agree what works; keep it working. No score. No inspection. Walk it with the person who does the job.

Use: watch with the worker, check the next customer, test one change, then compare results.