



Ergonomic-Savvy Workplace



Ergonomics applies to all workplaces: health care, commercial, manufacturing, construction and industrial. Ergonomics is the study and design of human and environment [i.e. tasks, equipment, system] interaction to optimize human wellness and to enhance performance. **It's the law in Ontario to protect workers and prevent workplace hazards.** In physical ergonomics, minimizing and preventing Worksite Musculoskeletal Disorders are essential goals. Repetitive strain injuries contribute to these disorders. Cognitive [i.e. mental workload, training] and organizational [i.e. teamwork, management] ergonomics are also important domains in a workplace. A Health and Safety program includes a strong Ergonomic process.

Here's a summary of one approach to start or fine-tune your Ergonomics Program at Work.

ergonomics legislation

- > Due Diligence - Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act, [i.e. section 25 (2) (h)]
- > Canada Labour Code
- > Ontario Human Rights Code
- > WSIB Act - prevention & Return-to-Work
- > MOL - work refusals based on risks
- > CSA Office Ergonomic Standards
- > MSD Ontario Prevention Guidelines

integrated ergonomics program @ work

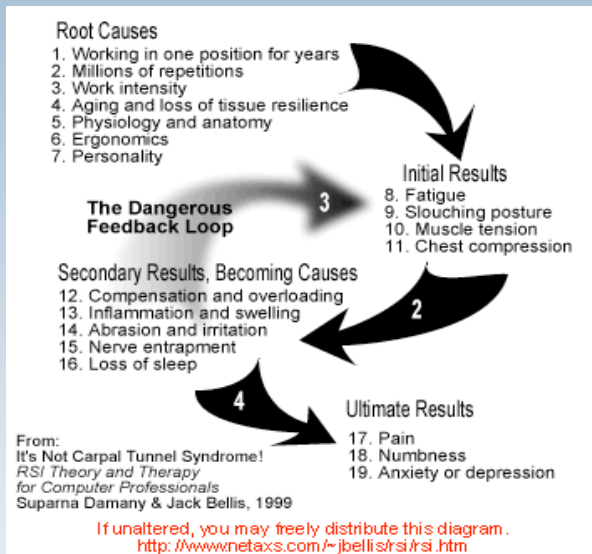
- 1. Build Foundation for Success:**
> upper management commitment & policies
 - 2. Recognizing MSD Hazards & Concerns**
> force, awkward postures, repetition, static work, vibration, cold, impact loading
> being proactive and reactive
 - 3. Conducting MSD Risk Assessments**
> measuring level of risk in each hazard and if hazard above acceptable guidelines
> also conducting discomfort surveys, injury stats, checking anthropometric tables
> i.e. use NIOSH, Snook, ANSI, RULA
 - 4. Implement Hazard Controls**
> Engineering [i.e. design, layout],
Administrative [i.e. job rotation, training],
Personal Protective Equipment [i.e. gloves]
 - 5. Follow-up & Re-Measure Hazards**
 - 6. Training & Communication**
> see box on far right
- * this is a dynamic and ongoing process*

what's a MSD? [musculoskeletal disorder]

Workplace risks and hazards contribute to musculoskeletal disorders [MSDs]. Tissues involved include: nerves, muscles, tendons, ligaments, bursa, blood vessels, joints, and discs. This disorder may also be called repetitive strain injuries, cumulative trauma disorders, or tendinitis [carpal tunnel syndrome]. There are also MSDs that are caused by a falls, medical conditions or vehicle collision injuries.

3 stages of MSDs [some symptoms]:

- 1st - pain with activity, usually disappears after few hours
 - 2nd - pain with work, may be during sleep, gone next day
 - 3rd - pain continues next day before working, wake at night
- MSDs cause 42% of all lost time claims and with 27 million lost days. In Ontario, employers paid more than 12 billion in direct and indirect costs related to MSD & these claims.**



value of training and awareness

- Types of awareness training:
- > lunch & learn sessions for hourly employees
 - > teaching safety leaders how to conduct risk assessments
 - > training engineers in using ergonomic designs

Speak the language of the stakeholders

For example, if you can demonstrate to the plant manager that providing funding to support ergonomics initiatives is going to have a positive impact on the bottom line of the business, you will get buy-in. Similarly, if you can show that improving working conditions is going to reduce turnover rates, the HR Manager will be happier. And at the same time, if you can enlighten your manufacturing engineers on how to improve productivity by incorporating ergonomic design guidelines into workstation setups, they will have your back.

inspiration...



Employees do while working

- S - switch sides [if possible]
- T - tuck abs [keep core strong]
- O - oxygen in [breathe!]
- P - protect back [work smart]

resources

www.ccohs.ca: Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
www.labour.gov.on.ca: click Health & Safety then Tools [can access WSIB MSD guidelines too]

ace-ergonomics.ca: Association of Canadian Ergonomists
oka.on.ca: Ontario Kinesiology Association

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