

Workplace Ergonomics

Introduction:

Musculoskeletal disorders including muscle strains, tendinitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, and back pain are the most common injuries in the workplace. Exposure to risk factors such as lifting heavy items, working in awkward positions, bending, reaching overhead, pushing and pulling heavy loads, stationary position, direct pressure, vibration, and repetition increases a workers' risk of injury. Developing musculoskeletal disorders in high-risk industries can be greatly reduced by implementing an ergonomic process.

Discussion Points:

- Identify possible ergonomic hazards in your work environment
- Wellness of employees has a direct impact on risk of injury
- Training and understanding the importance of ergonomic safety practices
- Five aspects of ergonomics: safety, comfort, ease of use, productivity, and aesthetics
- A structured stretching program can reduce muscle strain, increase blood flow, and alleviate pain

Discussion:

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) affect muscles, ligaments, tendons, nerves, and blood vessels. According to the most recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately two million work-related MSDs occur yearly in the United States; This accounts for 56-63 percent of all illnesses and injuries reported to OSHA and are among the most frequently reported causes of lost or restricted work time.

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders can be prevented by implementing an ergonomic process that uses the principles of a safety and health program to address hazards. An ergonomic process involves identifying and assessing ergonomic problems before they result in musculoskeletal disorders. Identifying ergonomic risk factors, making an assessment based on scientific applications, then improving the work area are important aspects in reducing exposure to risks leading to injury.

Training is an important element in the ergonomic process; it ensures that workers are aware of ergonomics and its benefits, become informed about ergonomic-related concerns, and understand the importance of reporting early symptoms of MSDs.

There are five aspects of ergonomics: safety, comfort, ease of use, productivity, and aesthetics. When safety practices are applied and followed, there is potential for improved productivity, employee engagement, and morale.

As always, stay safe out there!



February 14, 2022