

Top Workplace Risk Factors from OSHA



Physical Therapy can be instrumental in preventing and mitigating ergonomic risk factors that often lead to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) in the workplace. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), key ergonomic risk factors include repetitive motions, awkward postures, forceful exertions, and contact stress. Here are six tips related to the most common risk factors that physical therapy can help address:

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Postural Education

- Physical therapists can teach proper sitting and standing postures to minimize strain on the spine and reduce awkward postures.
- Regular assessments and adjustments can ensure that workers maintain optimal postural alignment during their tasks.

Manual Handling Training

- Teach proper lifting techniques to avoid back injuries, such as using legs instead of the back, keeping loads close to the body, and avoiding twisting motions, which mitigates forceful exertions and awkward postures.
- Use of assistive devices and team lifting for heavy loads to reduce strain.

Strengthening Exercise

- Design strengthening exercises that target muscles supporting the back, shoulders, and core to enhance overall stability and resilience against forceful exertions.
- Implement resistance training programs to build endurance and reduce fatigue.

Stretching & Flexibility

- Develop and implement stretching routines to improve flexibility and reduce muscle tension, particularly in areas prone to repetitive motions like the wrists, shoulders, and back.
- Encourage periodic breaks for stretching to prevent muscle stiffness and improve circulation.

Task Rotation & Job Design

- Recommend job rotation schedules to minimize repetitive strain by varying tasks and engaging different muscle groups.
- Design jobs to include a mix of activities that reduce continuous exposure to high-risk ergonomic factors.

Ergonomic Assessment

- Conduct workplace ergonomic assessments to identify risk factors and recommend adjustments to workstations and tools to reduce awkward postures and contact stress.
- Personalize ergonomic setups to fit each worker's needs, such as adjusting chair height, monitor placement, and keyboard positioning.

Taking proactive steps to prevent and mitigate ergonomic risk factors is crucial for maintaining a healthy and productive work environment. If you or your employees are experiencing discomfort or early signs of musculoskeletal issues, don't wait. Engaging with a physical therapist can provide the necessary education, exercises, and ergonomic adjustments to safeguard against injuries.

FYZICAL OKC provides ergonomic evaluations for the workplace. If you're already dealing with pain, schedule your evaluation, today.

