e-Compliance Training

Ergonomics - February 2019

THIS TRAINING SESSION IS RECOMMENDED FOR:

All staff members.

Training Objectives

This training module will ensure that employees understand the importance of ergonomic safety in the workplace, along with the following concepts:

- defining ergonomics and musculoskeletal disorders
- reporting signs and symptoms
- neutral body positioning
- ergonomic safety measures

Workers in many industries are exposed to ergonomic risk factors. These exposures can lead to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) over time. Common risk factors include lifting heavy items, bending, reaching overhead, pushing and pulling heavy loads, working in awkward body postures and performing the same or similar tasks repetitively. OSHA indicates that work-related MSDs are among the most frequently reported causes of lost or restricted work time. Even though ergonomic hazards are not always thought of as the most common risk in health care, they do pose a significant opportunity for injury.

Common examples of MSDs include:

- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Tendinitis
- Rotator cuff injuries (affects the shoulder)
- Epicondylitis (affects the elbow)
- Trigger finger
- Muscle strains and low back injuries

OSHA refers to ergonomics in layman's terms as "fitting a job to a person." Implementing ergonomic processes have been found to be effective in reducing the risk of developing MSDs.

Elements of an Effective Program

This training material will address a number of strategies that will help to reduce ergonomic risks:

- proper use of workstations,
- keeping accessories and equipment within reach,
- working with equipment/seating at proper heights,
- posture,
- micro-breaks/movement, and
- safe lifting.

It is important to remember that there is no one approach to ergonomic hazards, and not all hazards are present in every job or workplace. However, you can use the principles found in this training as they are applicable to your own situation.

Administrative and Work Practice Controls

A common example of an administrative control is scheduling the work shift to rotate workers away from tasks that involve continual exertion, repetitive motion, or awkward postures. Another common administrative control is proper use of equipment that assists in ergonomic safety.

Interactive Training Reminder

Compliance Training is an interactive training program in which you can address questions with other staff members or supervisors to obtain clarification for situations in your work setting.

Write down any questions that you have about the training topic and address them with your Training Coordinator or supervisor.

Workstations are constructed from multiple elements, including a desk, chair, monitor, keyboard, mouse, phone, calculator, and other accessories you might use. Workstations might also consist of a piece of diagnostic equipment and its accessories, such as an ultrasound machine with a handheld wand, or a dental hand piece. Workstation set up and adjustment are critical.

Working Radius - Using your core as the center of a circle, a working radius would be the area that is within comfortable reach when sitting/standing at your workstation.

Desk Setup – Frequently used devices, such as the keyboard, mouse, and telephone should remain within easy reach of the radius created by your forearms. Avoid hard, leading edges that can come into contact with your arm or wrist and cause contact stress affecting nerves and blood vessels.

Monitors – The proper viewing distance for computer monitors is between 20 to 40 inches (from eye to monitor surface). The top of the monitor should be at or slightly below eye level. When possible, use eye movement, instead of head movement, to view up and down on the monitor.

Monitors that have a bright white or harsh background color can cause eyestrain. Studies have shown that eyestrain can be reduced by changing the background from a bright white color to a soft powder blue.

Keyboard and Mouse – The placement of your keyboard and mouse are critical to limiting awkward wrist, arm, and shoulder postures. When keyboards are too low, they may cause you to type with your wrists bent, and when they are too high, they may cause you to raise your shoulders to elevate your arms, both of which can cause strain. The mouse should be located close to the keyboard, or it may cause you to overreach and place stress on the shoulder and arm. Keyboard shortcuts can help to reduce stress from too much mouse usage.

Engineering Controls

Engineering controls remove or isolate a hazard to reduce injury. OSHA indicates that engineering controls are the most desired, because they are most effective, when they are possible. Examples of engineering controls that can reduce/remove ergonomic hazards include:

- Using a device to lift and reposition heavy objects
- Reducing the weight of a load to limit force exertion
- Purchasing tools/handpieces that enable neutral postures
- Using mechanical devices that allow for adjustments in workstations
- Installing glare screens on computer workstations
- Using headsets for jobs that involve a lot of phone work

Personal Protective Equipment

According to OSHA, personal protective equipment is the last line of controls, because it has only limited effectiveness when dealing with ergonomic hazards. Padding can be used to reduce direct contact with hard, sharp or vibrating surfaces. Wrist rests can be used with computer workstations.

Posture and Neutral Body Positioning

Good posture will help to limit injuries caused by stress (on muscles and joints) and fatigue. Maintaining good posture involves keeping each part of the body in alignment with the neighboring parts to provide balance and support. Neutral body positioning means a comfortable working posture in which your joints are aligned so they reduce stress and strain on your muscles, tendons, and skeletal system. See the graphic below:

However, no matter how good your posture, if you hold the same posture for long lengths of time (known as static posture), your risk of injury increases. Avoid stiff, awkward, and static postures whenever possible. If you sit all day, take a moment to stand at your workstation and stretch. If you stand most of the day, take a momentary break to sit.

Standing Posture – Here are some posture tips for standing:

- Stand with weight mostly on the balls of the feet, not with weight on the heels and avoid locking the knees;
- Keep feet slightly apart, about shoulder-width and let arms hang naturally;
- Stand straight and tall, with shoulders upright; and
- If standing for long periods, shift weight from one foot to the other, or rock from heels to toes.

Lifting Safety - Lifting is one of the most dangerous activities when it comes to musculoskeletal disorders. Lower back injuries happen when assisting patients, moving supplies, and, in some cases, using equipment in the facility. Observe the following tips while lifting:

- Always bend at the knees, not the waist;
- Use the large leg and stomach muscles for lifting, not the lower back;
- When carrying a heavy or large object, keep it close to the body;
- If carrying something with one arm, switch arms frequently;
- Obtain assistance from another person instead of trying to lift or move extremely heavy items;
- Do not attempt to lift an item that is too heavy, or on which you are unable to get an appropriate grip.

Reporting

Promptly report any musculoskeletal symptoms to your supervisor or Safety Officer, so that work practices and your workstation can be adjusted/evaluated to prevent further injury. A medical evaluation may be provided if it is determined that you have already sustained an ergonomic injury or are developing an MSD.

e-Compliance Training Test

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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ STAFF POSITION: _____

Return your test to your supervisor or Compliance Coordinator upon completion. Individual tests will be maintained to document participation and understanding of the information. Review the training information to find the correct answers to any questions that may have been missed.

1 Healthcare workers are at low-risk for ergonomic injuries.

Select One **T** **F**

2 Personal protective equipment is the last line of controls, because it has only limited effectiveness when dealing with ergonomic hazards.

Select One **T** **F**

3 Telephones should be placed just beyond your reach, so they don't get in the way of other equipment.

Select One **T** **F**

4 When lifting, first bend at the waist, and try keep your knees straight.

Select One **T** **F**

5 When standing for much of your work shift, you should stand with weight mostly on the balls of the feet, not with weight on the heels.

Select One **T** **F**

6 For workstations, the top of monitor should be at or just below eye level.

Select One **T** **F**

7 When carrying something heavy with one arm, do not switch while carrying as you could injure your shoulder or back while transferring the load.

Select One **T** **F**

8 OSHA indicates that work-related MSDs are among the most frequently reported causes of lost or restricted work time.

Select One **T** **F**

9 The background color on your monitor should be bright white whenever possible, to reduce strain on eyes.

Select One **T** **F**

10 Neutral body positioning is having a comfortable working posture in which your joints are aligned so they reduce stress and strain on your muscles, tendons, and skeletal system.

Select One **T** **F**

Click Here to Take Your Quiz