

We, the Key, to Cost Effective Ergonomics

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Employers both large and small need look no more for the best return on their investment dollars. A recent study of over 43,000 blue-collar workers concluded that a net difference of 11,726 fewer disability days were used, over a two-year period, as the result of a comprehensive health promotion program provided by the employer. The return was over 100 percent for the total investment in this health promotion program. Ergonomics is not only a "buzz-word" for the 90s; it is the primary component of any successful health promotion program, and it costs employers far less than any other human resource investment. As the old saying goes, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

As musculoskeletal specialists we know that chiropractic manipulation can relieve severe back pain, quicker, and at a lower cost than any other effective treatment method. We are the most qualified professionals to educate, evaluate, and correct potentially injurious postural habits and to offer alternatives to unnecessary physical stress, through the duration of repetitive-motion tasks.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Department of Labor, and some individual states, have developed a manual to serve as a useful guide for employers who are developing safety and health programs on their own. Recent litigation in the state of Maine has resulted in mandatory postural training for employees in certain sedentary environments. The U.S. federal government unveiled voluntary guidelines which assist in guarding against some repetitive-motion injuries. Meanwhile, San Francisco city officials consider an ordinance which would reduce injury and stress in municipal and privately owned places of employment. Employers cringe at the potentially exorbitant costs of replacing office furnishings and machinery (which may not be necessary) to meet new standards.

Today, the opportunity awaits us to fulfill the needs of, and provide services for a new, informed generation of working Americans who hunger for a healthier lifestyle, are in active pursuit of a healthier environment, and who respect the efforts of the employers who supply them with preventative training. The fact is, ergonomic training is available now at a very low incremental cost to employers. We, the most qualified professionals for this task, hold the key to cost effective ergonomic training, which is the "ounce of prevention" required to assure no need for the costly "pound of cure."

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