

Successful “Stay at Work and Return to Work” Strategies

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Work Comp Coordinator

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Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this seminar, the participant will be able to:

- Explain the impact of aging on the musculoskeletal system and review the impact of work-related musculoskeletal disorders for employers
- Identify POTENTIAL various SOLUTIONS for managing the workers' compensation spend in the aging workforce population
- Discuss functional Return-to-work therapy programs and the goals/expectations
- Explore the importance for having and communicating a functionally based job description
- Explain a Work Conditioning program and when to recommend the program.
- Discuss Functional Capacity Evaluations results which will assist referring physician with disability ratings

Introduction

- Rockhurst University Graduate
- Physical Therapist- 25 years- Select Physical Therapy
- WorkStrategies Coordinator- KC/ Mid-MO Market
- Education programs- Stretch, Wellness, Back Schools
- Post Offer Employment Testing- Development and Implementation
- Job analyses- Job Description development
- Ergonomic assessments- Certified Ergonomic Assessment Specialist
- Group Fitness Instructor; 2 kiddos

Who is Select Physical Therapy

- Select Medical
- Approximately 1900 Out-Patient clinics nationally
- 34 locations locally KC-Columbia-St. Joseph
- 7 Locations in Wichita
- 25 locations in Iowa- Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and into Eastern IA
- 88 locations in St. Louis

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Statistics

- 76 million baby boomers (1946 - 1964)
- Current ages 59 - 77
- 25% of U.S. workforce will be in the 55+ age group in 2024²
- Not enough younger workers to replace them¹
- 37 million workers in the Baby Boomer age group²
- 10 million workers over age 65²

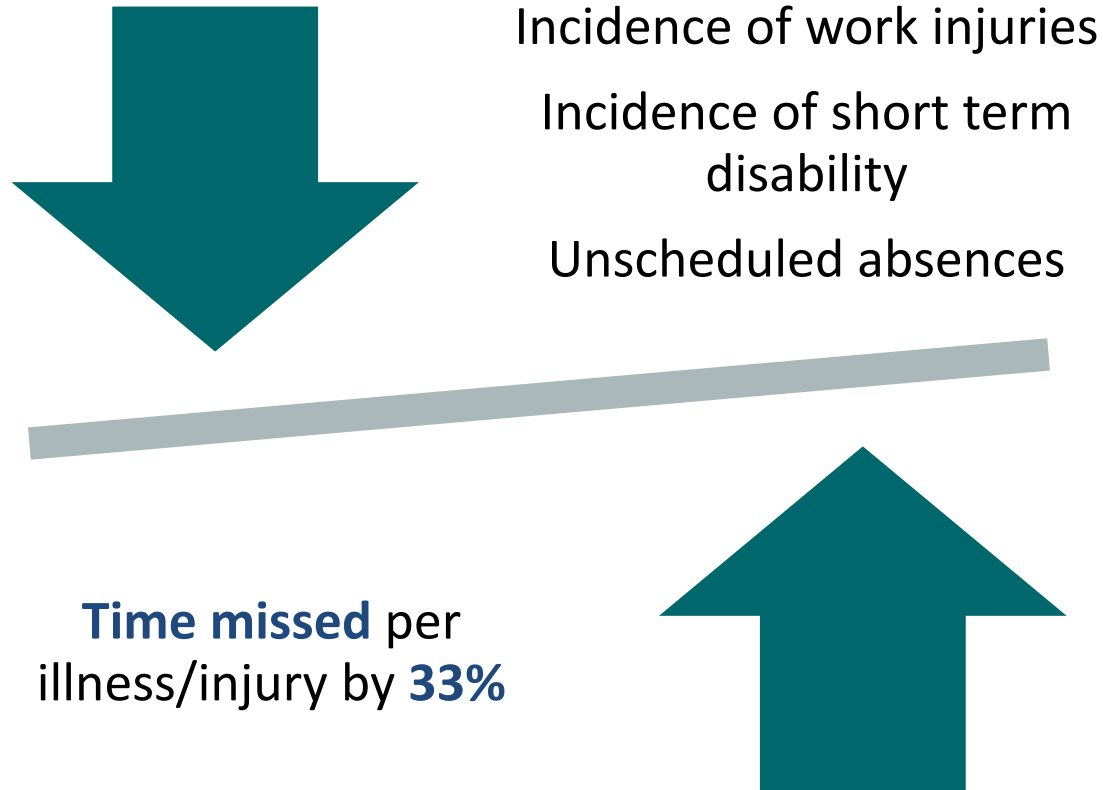
1. An Aging Workforce's Effect On U.S. Employers, Scott Reeves, Forbes.com, 09.29.05

2. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019).

3. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021)

Statistics

> 40 Y/O



Source: Aging Workforce Challenge to Corporate Health and Productivity Kenneth Mitchell, Ph.D.

Statistics

>40 Y/O 50 % of all short-term disability
 75% of all long-term disability

WHY?

impairments of: musculoskeletal, circulatory systems, mental disorders, cancer disorders

Additional risk factors

- smoking
- lack of exercise
- obesity
- uncontrolled diabetes and hypertension

Leads to healthcare costs 300% higher than < 40 Y/O

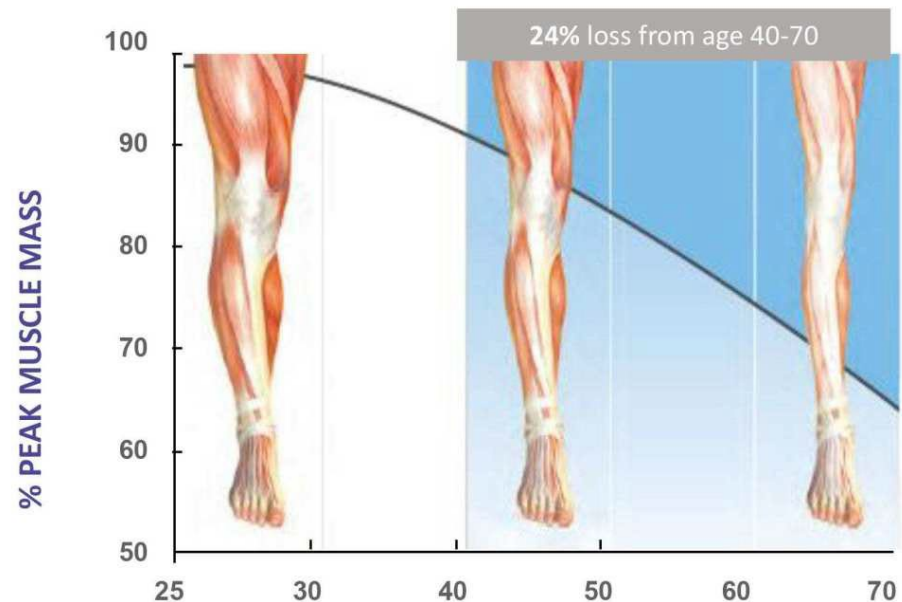
Physical Changes With Age



- Strength
- Muscular flexibility
- Joint range of motion
- Postural steadiness
- Grip strength
- Nervous system responses
- Visual capacity
- Mental processing
- Blood flow and tactile feedback

Loss of Strength with Age

- Decreased muscle mass
- Decreased force capabilities of our muscles
- Slower to respond to an action
- Fatigue faster
- Decreased water content of tendons, cartilage and ligaments



Loss of Flexibility



- Decreased joint flexibility and motion
- Increased pain in cold and damp weather
- Loss of flexibility is associated with increased incidence of falls

Employers nightmare formula:

excessive lifting + repetitive lifting + reaching + pushing + pulling +
arthritis/bursitis + time = **potential injury/ inevitable**

Loss of Grip Strength

- Decreased grip with aging
 - leads to:
 - decreased lifting ability
 - difficulty turning a valve, opening a jar
 - decreased pulling ability
- Reduce amount of gripping time
- Reduce gripping force
 - mechanical assists
 - appropriate size tools



Solutions for Managing the Aging Worker

- Job descriptions with accurate physical demands
- Post offer and fit for duty testing
- Education programs
- Ergonomic assessments
- Early Symptom Intervention
- Functional PT and Work Conditioning
- Functional Capacity Evaluation



Post Offer and Fit For Duty Testing

- Medical screening of employment candidates
- Screening out unwilling candidates
- Physical demands screening
- Positional tolerance/agility screening
- Functional baseline data collection
- Medical risk identification
 - Cost savings through
 - Injury prevention (hiring physically qualified individuals)
 - Musculoskeletal Baseline that can be utilized post injury
 - Apportionment savings (having baseline data in case of injury)

Post Offer and Fit For Duty Tests



**Should be
job specific**

Post-Employment: aka “Fit for Duty” Testing

- “Under ADA, medical information or medical exams may be required when an employee suffers an injury on the job.
- Such an exam may be required when an employee wishes to return to work after an injury or illness, if it is job related and consistent with business necessity.”

Fit for Duty Testing

- EEOC Enforcement Guidance: Disability Related Inquiries and Medical Examinations of Employees under the ADA
- Allows employer to test
 - when an employer “has a reasonable belief, based on objective evidence, that an employee’s ability to perform essential job functions will be impaired by a medical condition”
 - When an employer can reasonably attribute performance problems to a known medical condition

FIT FOR DUTY RESULTS

- What if worker fails a fit for duty test, what do you do?
- Lay them off and test again later.

OR

- Lay them off and have them complete a specific training program to get back in shape and then test again later.



Job Site Analysis

WorkTask Analysis

- Narrative report describing each essential functions performed
- Physical and postural demands quantified
- Frequency of each function listed
- Describe how the function is performed
- List and description of tools used.
- Valuable tool for return to work

Job Analysis Reports/ Identifying Job demands

WORKSTRATEGIES <i>Keeping America on the Job!</i>		WorkTask Analysis	
EMPLOYER INFORMATION			
Job Position:	Field Service Representative	Type of Business:	Water Distribution
Employer:	Water Company	Department:	
Location:	USA	City:	Waterville
Address:	100 Water lane	Zip Code:	H2000
State:	USA	Contact Title:	Operations Supervisor
Contact Name:	Mr. Aqua	Fax:	123-456-7890
Phone:	123-456-7890		
Email:	aqua@hotmail.com		
Brief Description of Employers Business: Water Utility, distribution, repair and maintenance.			
WORKSTRATEGIES® REPRESENTATIVE INFORMATION			
Name:	Kate McBee	Date:	12/15/10
Company:	NovaCare/KORT/Select	Title:	WorkStrategies regional Director
Address:	1227 Goss Ave	City:	Louisville
State:	KY	Zip Code:	40217
Phone:	502-552-4914	Email:	kmcbee@kort.com
JOB DESCRIPTION			
Job Title: Field Service Representative			
Classification: ☐ Sedentary ☐ Light ☐ Medium ☒ Heavy ☐ Very Heavy			
(Up to 10 lbs.) (11 to 20 lbs.) (21 to 50 lbs.) (51 to 100 lbs.) (>100 lbs.)			
Job Performed: ☐ Part of Team ☐ Rotation Basis ☐ Assembly Line ☒ Alone			
Max Weight Handled: 50 lbs. Employment Hours: 8 Hrs. worked/ day 40 Hrs. worked/ wk. Yes Lunch and Breaks			
Brief Description of Job: Employee in this position is assigned a list of job tasks for each shift that could include turning water off and on, changing meters, and trouble shooting. The employee in this position has to take 24 hr call on rotation with other employees in addition to 40 hours a week.			
Educational Requirements (Specific Training, Experience, Certification and/or Licensing): N/A			
Dress Code/ Protective Gear: Vest or Jacket with reflective coloring, steel toed boots, hard hat, ear plugs, water boots and snow cleats.			
Tools / Equipment: Lid Key, Hook Tool for larger lids, shovel, wrenches, electric pump, rod to probe ground for pipe, computer in truck, truck, tool to listen to pipe, small and large meters, miscellaneous tools to work on water pipes and meters and hand pump to get water out of vaults.			

WORKSTRATEGIES <i>Keeping America on the Job!</i>		WorkTask Analysis	
EMPLOYER INFORMATION			
Employer: Water Company	Job Title: Field Service Representative	Date: 12/15/10	
*Frequency performed per shift: N = Never (0%) O = Occasional (1 – 33%) F = Frequent (34 – 66%) C = Constant (67 – 100%) One Min. – 2:30 Hours 2:31 – 5:30 Hours 5:31 – 8:00 Hours 8:01 – 11:00 Hours Once - 20 Min / Hour 21-40 Min / Hour 41-60 Min / Hour 61-80 Min / Hour			
Tasks	Frequency	Essential	Task Physical Demands
1. Gather equipment for day and job list containing 40-45 orders.	Occasional	Yes ☒ No ☐	1. Walking to work area. 2. Communicating with fellow employees. 3. Lifting necessary equipment and carrying and loading into truck.
2. Drive to and from locations for jobs.	Frequent	Yes ☒ No ☐	1. Climb in and out of truck. 2. Push and Pull door open and closed. 3. Operate controls of truck and turn steering wheel. About 4 hours in truck per day. 4. Ability to see other cars and follow traffic laws.
			
3. Turn water on and off.	Frequent	Yes ☒ No ☐	1. Locate appropriate meter and use key to twist bolt and lift 15-50# lid. 2. Bend to reach key to shut on/off valve and turn in appropriate direction using 20-30# of force. 3. Replace lid and tighten. 4. Walk to customer door and let them know about service performed or leave a note. 5. Enter work performed into computer in truck.
			

Education Programs for Injury Prevention

- Safety education
- Ergonomics
- Behavior modification
- Stretching programs



Potential Ergonomic Solutions

- Workplace prevention



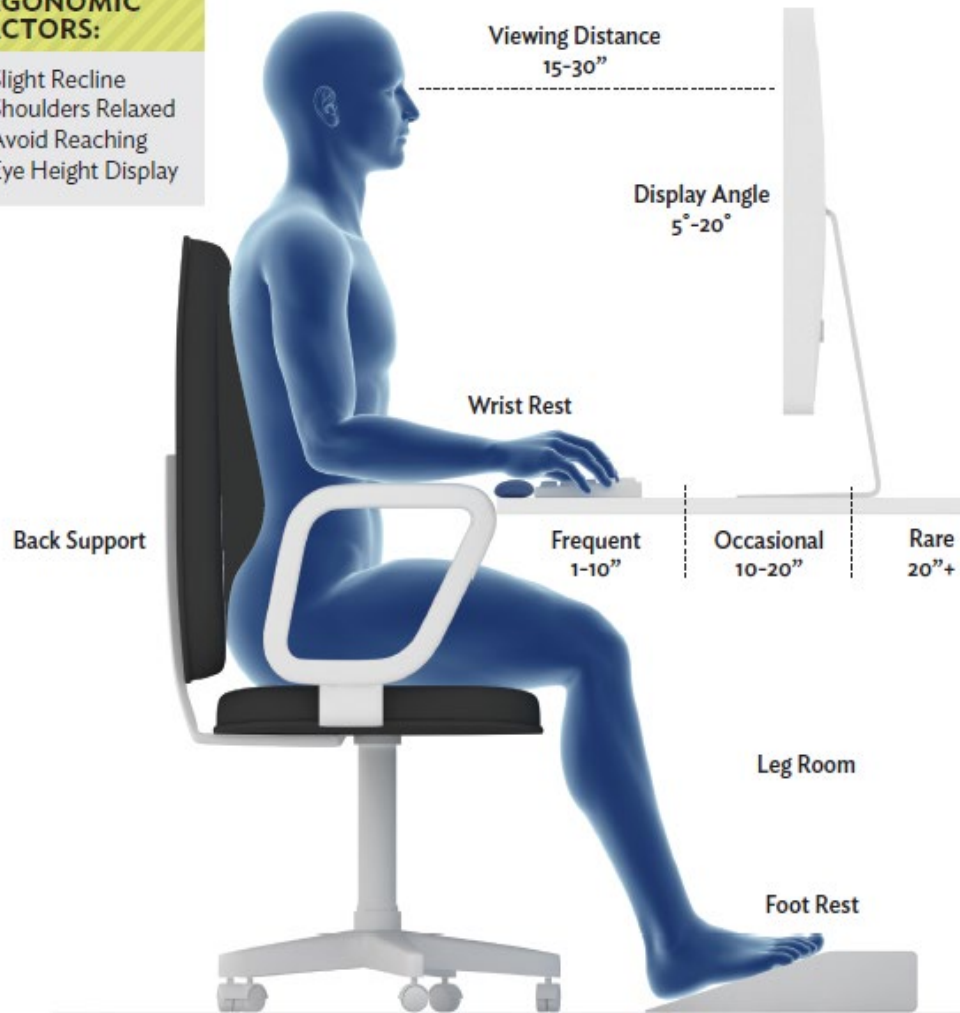
Ergonomic Assessments

- 80% of injuries are due to worker behavior not job design.
- Evaluate worker behaviors and make recommendations to decrease stress on joints.
- For 20% that are related to job design, reset workstation to fit worker, pace, or rotate jobs before buying all new equipment.



**ERGONOMIC
FACTORS:**

- Slight Recline
- Shoulders Relaxed
- Avoid Reaching
- Eye Height Display



POWER ZONE



- Position with least amount of stress on body
- Directly in front of body between shoulders and mid-thigh
- Stress increases the further away from the power zone

On-The-Job Stretching Program



WORKSTRATEGIES[®]
Keeping America on the Job!

SOLUTION- STRETCH PROGRAM

- A. Reduces muscle tension
- B. Helps coordination
- C. Increases range of motion
- D. Prevents injuries
- E. Makes strenuous activities easier
- F. Develops body awareness
- G. Promotes circulation/blood flow
- H. It feels good! REALLY!!!



WHEN TO STRETCH

- **Before** starting the day
- **During** the day
- **After** prolonged sitting or standing or activity
- Muscles tight/stiff
- When there is time and when it is convenient
- Strive for consistency



ARM CIRCLES

1. Stand erect with feet shoulder width apart and arms at your sides.
2. Keeping your arms straight, slowly raise them to shoulder height.
3. Perform 5 forward circles then 5 backward circles.
4. Return to start position.
5. Perform 5 times in each direction.



STANDING ROWS

1. Stand erect with feet shoulder width apart, with arms straight out in front of you.
2. Imagine you are pulling something to your chest.
3. Perform this action while you squeeze your shoulder blades together.
4. Return to start position.
5. Repeat 10 times.



SIDE REACH

1. Stand erect with feet shoulder width apart and arms at your sides.
2. Raise your left arm overhead as you bend to the right.
3. Repeat to the opposite side.
4. Perform 5 times in each direction.



SHOULDER STRETCH

1. Stand straight with your feet shoulder width apart.
2. Reach across your body with your right arm.
3. Grab the right elbow with your left hand and gently pull across your body.
4. Keep your shoulders and hips pointed straight ahead.
5. Hold 10 seconds.
6. Repeat 3 times to each side.



WRIST EXTENSION STRETCH

1. Stand with feet shoulder width apart.
2. Straighten left arm in front of you with your palm up.
3. Extend hand down.
4. Gently push down with right hand
5. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
6. Repeat for your opposite hand.

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WRIST FLEXION STRETCH

1. Stand with feet shoulder width apart.
2. Straighten your right arm in front of you.
3. Keep your elbow locked in a straight position.
4. Bend your hand down and gently push down with your left hand.
5. Hold for 10 seconds, repeat 3 times down and 3 times up. Repeat for your opposite hand.



STANDING CAT/CAMEL

1. Stand with hands on thighs, supporting the weight of your upper body.
2. Slowly arch your back by rolling your pelvis forward and raising your head.
3. Hold for 1 second.
4. Slowly reverse the motion by rolling your pelvis back and dropping your head, creating a "hump" in your back.
5. Hold for 1 second.
6. Slowly repeat 10 times each direction.



STANDING EXTENSION

1. Stand straight with both hands on your hips.
2. Gently lean back on the waist.
3. Keep your head level and your knees straight.
4. Hold for 5 seconds.
5. Repeat 5 times.



STANDING HAMSTRING STRETCH

1. Stand straight with one foot on a step, stool or chair.
2. Keep your legs straight.
3. Keep your back straight.
4. Lean forward gently, do not bend at the waist.
5. Hold for 10 seconds.
6. Repeat 3 times each side.



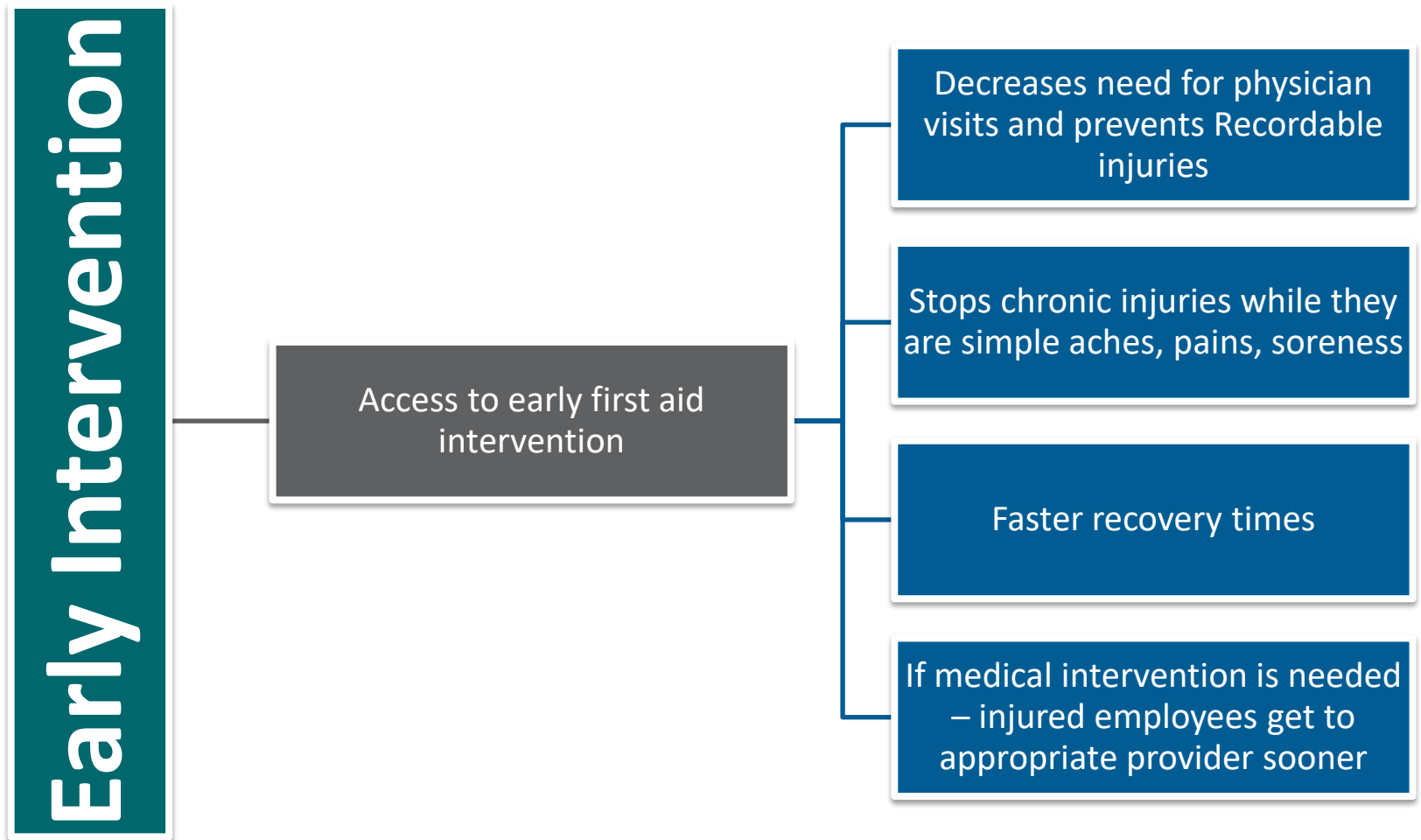
WALL STRETCH

1. Stand facing a wall approximately arm's length away.
2. Place your right leg back one step with the heel flat on the ground and take a step forward with your left leg.
3. With palms flat on the wall, lean forward while keeping the right knee straight, heel flat and back straight.
4. Hold 10 seconds.
5. Repeat 3 times to each side.

.75 x 11.75 in

Report any discomfort or pain to your immediate supervisor or manager.

Early Symptom Intervention



Various delivery settings of Early Symptom Intervention (ESI) Programs



OnSite

- Injury Prevention Specialist onsite at employer location
- Set weekly schedule
- Appropriate for larger employers or high injury risk



Center Based

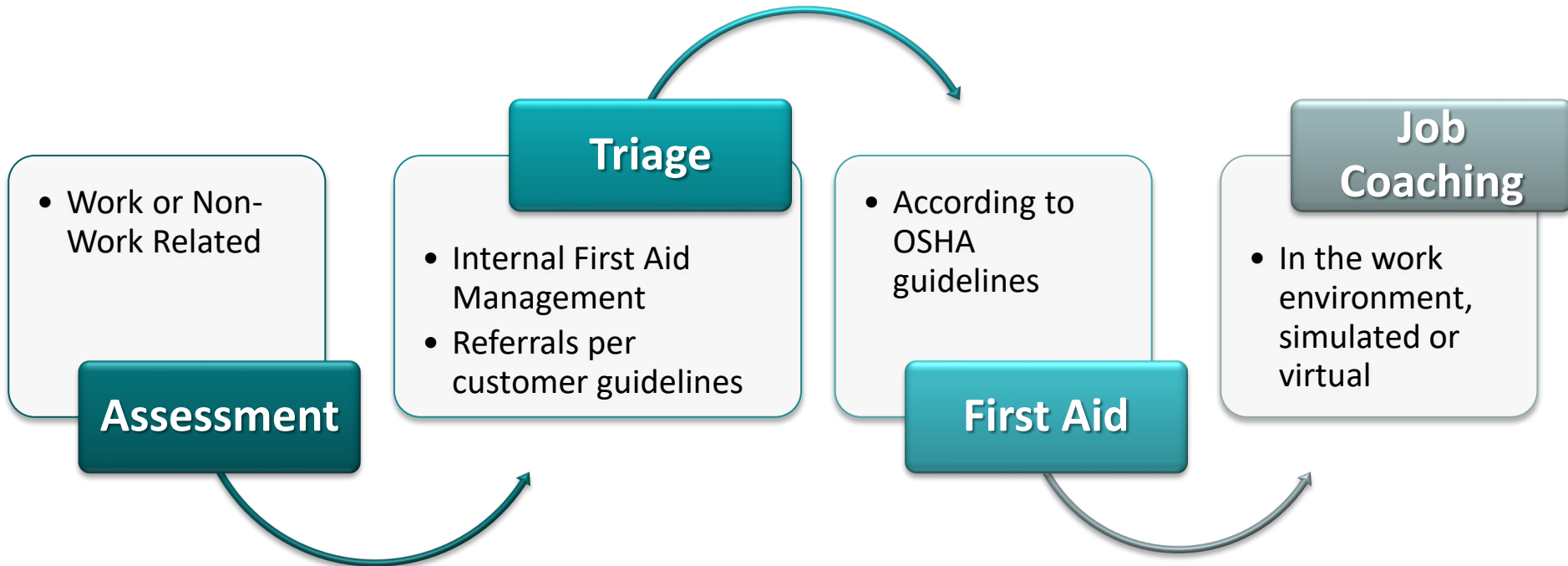
- Employees go to nearby facility
- Appointments within 24 hours
- Appropriate for smaller employers



Virtual

- Employees “call” Select Medical Virtual Injury Prevention Specialist
- Appropriate for remote / smaller / satellite locations, off hours
- On call

Early Symptom Intervention (ESI)



ESI: First Aid

Regulated by OSHA: 1904.7(b)(5)(ii)



Non-prescription Meds
at non-prescription dose



Wound Care



Hot or Cold Application



Non-Rigid Support



Massage



Hydration

Return to Work Rate:

Why is this important to us?

Injured Workers' Likelihood of RTW with same employer:

- Out 6 weeks 80%
- Out 6 months 50%
- Out 1 year <15%

Key to success: injury prevention and the proper care with a sense of urgency and proper communication to all involved parties.

Functional Return to Work PT/OT

- For your injuries make sure they are getting skilled active care that is job specific.
- For Medium jobs and higher consider progressing patients into work conditioning programs.



WorkStrategies Customized Return to Work

Self-perceived Abilities

Function



Psychosocial Factors



Abilities Job Match



Therapeutic Alliance



Functional Testing/Training



Communication



Dynamic Lifting

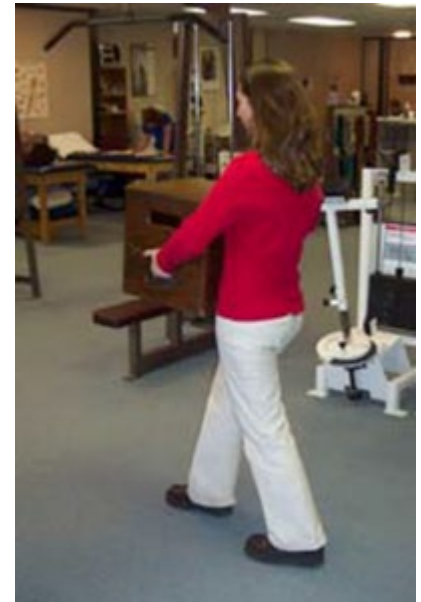
Standardized

- Waist to Shoulder Lift
- Floor to Waist Lift
- Bilateral Carry



Job specific

- Shoulder to Overhead
- Single Arm Carry
- Job specific lift or carry
- Push/Pull Isometric



Physical Demand Characteristics of Work

U.S. Dept of Labor Standards

Physical Demand Level	Force	Frequency	Standing/Walking
Sedentary	up to 10# or less	Occasional Frequent	Occasional
Light	Up to 20# Up to 10# Negligible	Occasional Frequent Constant	Significant degree
Medium	20 to 50# 10 to 25# Up to 10#	Occasional Frequent Constant	In excess of Light work
Heavy	50 to 100# 25 to 50# 10 to 20#	Occasional Frequent Constant	In excess of Medium work
V. Heavy	In excess of 100# In excess of 20# In excess of 20#	Occasional Frequent Constant	In excess of Heavy

Sample: If a patient lifted 45 pounds from waist to shoulder occasionally, what is the physical demand level?

Positional Tolerance Testing

- Job specific in regard to position and time duration
- Simulate job -combine activities
- Physiologic monitoring



Sitting	Standing
Walking	Climbing (stairs/ladders)
Squatting	Stooping
Balancing	Grasping
Kneeling	Crouching
Crawling	Reaching Forward, OH, Floor Level
Handling	Fingering
Feeling	Job Specific Activities

Treatment Goals Sample- Ideally 2 wks. minimum

- **Current work status:**
 - Off work/ light duty/modified duty
- **Short term goals:**
 - Increase lifting tolerance to 50 lbs. in 2 wks.
 - Increase walking tolerance by 10 minutes in 2 wks.
- **Long term Goals:**
 - Increase lifting capacity to 100 lbs. by D/C to meet RTW requirement.



Police Job Simulation - Sample

- Maneuvering/drag persons to safety: > 200 lbs.
- Pursue suspect and negotiate obstacles:
 - Climb wall
 - Jump over culvert
 - Crawl through ditch
- Ascend / descend stairs to enter buildings:
 - 3-5 flights with a **15** pound belt



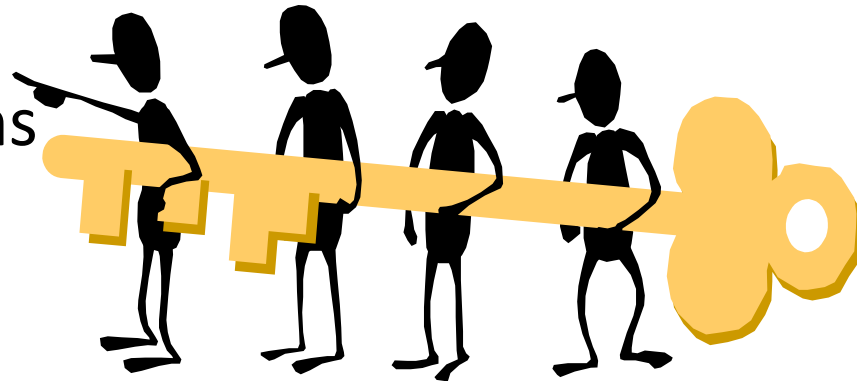


Progress Notes

- Performed at a minimum every 2 weeks
 - Re-assess and progress
- Compares objective progress for musculoskeletal and functional abilities
- Outlines goals
- Identifies current status in relation to RTW requirements
- Clinical rationale to justify continuation of program or discharge
- COMMUNICATION

Review- Keys to Success

- Create Therapeutic Alliance
- Establish Patient expectations
- Know the Referral expectations
- Functional Treatment
- Documentation
- Communicate



Why Work Conditioning?



Bridge the Gap

Work Conditioning: Primary Objective

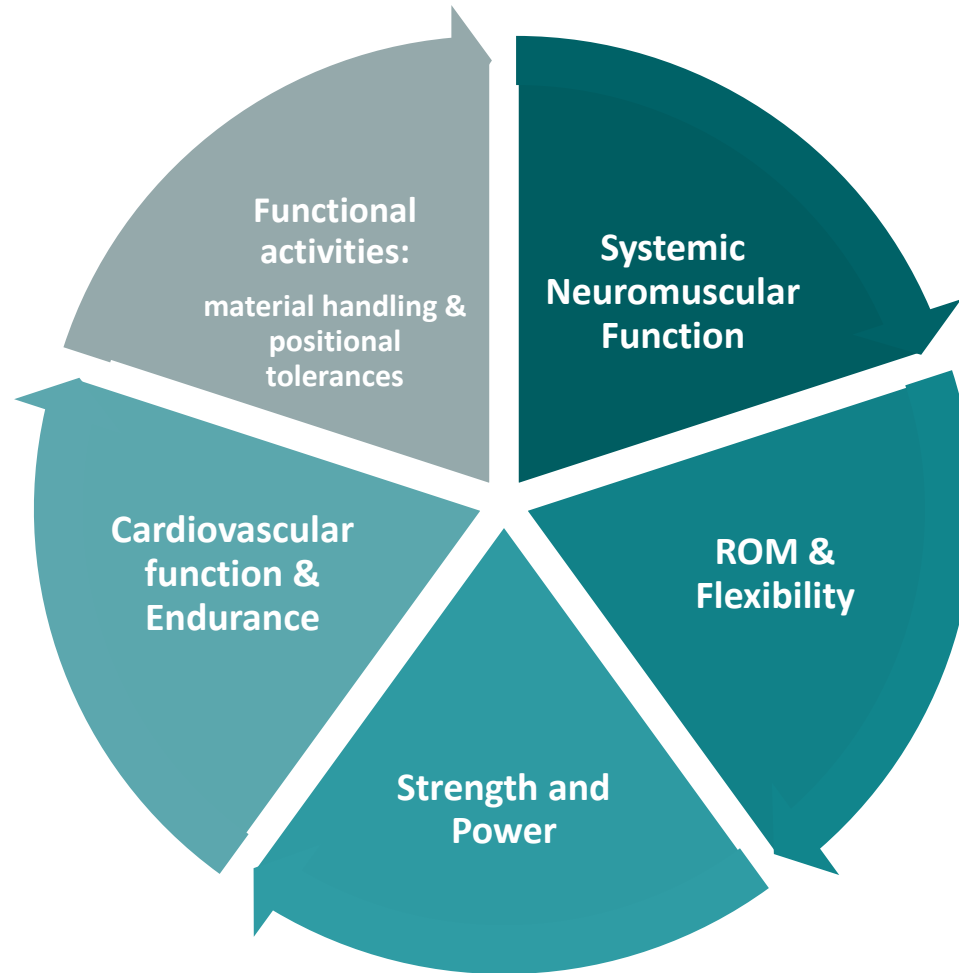
Restore physical capacity and function to enable the patient to return to work & stay at work

Due to deconditioning...

- The time when an injured employee returns to work presents a higher risk to re-injury

Work Conditioning

APTA: An intensive, work-related, goal oriented conditioning program to restore....



...physical capacity & function to enable the patient to return to work.



BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE SELECT MEDICAL OUTPATIENT DIVISION

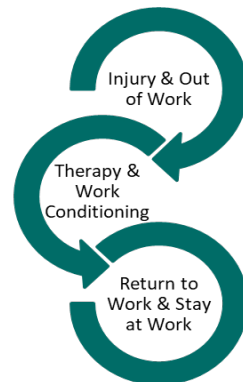
Work Conditioning is a structured, intensive functional restoration program specifically designed to assist the injured worker return to work through job simulation, physical conditioning and education.

It's ideal for the patient who has:

- An occupation in the Medium, Heavy or Very Heavy Physical Demand Category
- Jobs that require highly repetitive activities or sustained, awkward postures
- A return to work goal but is not yet working full duty
- Completed physical therapy

Work Conditioning can also be beneficial in cases with higher risks for poor outcomes:

- Prolonged healing, conservative protocols after surgery, & deconditioning
- Severe, catastrophic injuries
- Co morbidities and multiple body part injuries
- Injured workers lacking the confidence to return to work
- Injured workers demonstrating fear avoidance behaviors



Example: Delivery driver sustained a shoulder rotator cuff tear, had surgery, and has been going to therapy 3 days a week for an hour for 10 weeks. He is 12 weeks post op and the doctor is suggesting RTW. Driver is not confident that he is ready and is fearful of re injury. Are we setting him up for success?

Bridge the Gap with Work Conditioning:

Progress his one hour of therapy, 3 days/wk to a 3-5 day a week program that prepares him physically and mentally for a 10 hour day of delivery packages up to 70 pounds overhead, day after day.

Outcomes & Benefits of work conditioning:

- 83% of our candidates met their return to work goals
- Our programs average 4-6 weeks in length, 3-5 days a week
- The average candidate gained 10% in strength per week
- Candidates gain the confidence to perform their job successfully and independently
- On average, 70% of those that complete a functional program were still working 1 year later

Lisa Fore, Yoheli Perez, Randy Neblett, Sali Asih, Tom G. Mayer, Robert J. Gatchel, ABPP 2015

For more information, please contact:

Name: Robyn Lewis, PT

Email: lewisre@selectmedical.com

FCE Report: The Final Analysis

Conclusions answer the referral question based on the comprehensive collection and interpretation of data gathered throughout the functional evaluation process

Defines work
performance level
based on objective
data

- Met/Not Met Job Demands

Defines current
functional
capabilities

- Abilities despite limitations

Validity:
performance
consistency and
exertion

- Accurate representation or
minimal functional abilities

WorkStrategies: Continuum of Services

Partner with customers to identify solutions to reduce the cost of the total spend on work related injuries through pre-loss and post-loss services



In Review

- Know your options across the Continuum
- Be PROactive
- Communicate and navigate
- Align with a provider that understands WC expectations



THANK YOU 😊 !!

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- Questions?

■ Questions

