OCCUPATIONAL HEATLH BULLETIN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE : QUARTER 4 2019

Ask the Expert

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The physical therapist who works in our Sanford OccMed clinics have certification for Functional Capacity Evaluations, Job Function Analysis (work site evaluations) and Job Function testing through DSI Work Solutions. The certification in Job Function analysis allows PTs to visit a job site and identify the physical demands needed to perform that particular position or job title. It allows PTs to take that information and create a Job Function Description that the company can place in their existing job descriptions that clearly and specifically define the physical demands of the job. It also allows PTs to share this information with any medical professionals working to get an injured worker back to work as quickly and safely as possible.
A medical provider can use this information to help set realistic work restriction by "speaking the same language" as the company. It takes the guess work out of work restrictions.
PTs take information gathered by the Job Functional Analysis and create Job Function Tests that can be used by the company or a treating provider to test the worker and make sure they can safely meet the physical demands of the job.

"There is currently no "required" certification or special training for ergonomics."

These tests can be used in a variety of ways: Post Offer Testing, Post Injury Testing, and Return to Work.

Work conditioning: a program offered as a way to return an injured worker back to their prior level of function. Information gathered in a Job Function analysis and knowledge of the job is used to develop a conditioning program for an injured worker. It is typically done 3-5 days per week, working on strengthening conditioning and replication job specific tasks to return to a worker to full duty work.

WHAT'S THAT MEAN?!

Post Offer Testing: performed after offering the job with the condition that they can pass the Job Function Test

Post Injury Testing: performed following a work related injury to assist the provider in setting work restriction and return to full duty work

Return to Work: performed following a personal injury or prolonged illness to make sure they can return to regular duty work

Did you know?

WSI can help with equipment cost if employer applies for Ergonomic Initiative Program where WSI covers 75% of cost of PT services.

Ergonomics
How do I do that?

As noted above there is no certification required for ergonomic assessments. There are trainings available through various sources including OSHA.

The main focus is on posture of the neck, shoulders, and wrists. There is also a focus on other aspects of work ergonomics including work desk set up.

Ensuring a discussion on this is beneficial including various options such as a vertical mouse, keyboards, roller mouse on keyboard, monitor risers, and sit to stand desks (ex: very desk).

SCREEN

Top of monitor at eye level, directly in front of you, and at a distance you can see without squinting.

KEYBOARD

Keep it close to your body. On your desk may be too high, your forearms should be slightly bent at 90 degrees.

CHAIR

Back support to avoid slumping. Feet firmly planted on the ground or footstool if your feet don't reach the ground. Move every 30-45 min!

Educate, educate, educate!

Workplace-based interventions for neck pain in office workers

Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis to investigate the effectiveness of workplace- based interventions for neck pain in office workers. There was moderate-quality evidence that neck/shoulder strengthening exercises and general fitness training were effective in reducing neck pain in office workers who were symptomatic, although the effect size was larger for strengthening exercises. Greater effects were observed with greater participation in exercise. Ergonomic interventions were supported by low-quality evidence. *Conclusion*: Workplace-based strengthening exercises were effective in reducing neck pain in office workers who were symptomatic, and the effect size was larger when the exercises were targeted to the neck/shoulder. https://academic.oup.com/ptj/article/98/1/40/4562646

Managing chronic musculoskeletal disorders in the workplace

A review to investigate whether there are effective workplace interventions that manage chronic musculoskeletal disorders. The review included 12 studies that investigated effectiveness of a specific strength exercise program or interventions provided by health professionals at the workplace when compared with controls or interventions not at the workplace. No intervention was clearly superior to another. *This study suggests that workplace interventions such as high-intensity strength exercises and/or integrated health care can decrease pain and symptoms for employees who experience long-term musculoskeletal disorders.* https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30126016