Comprehensive Injury Prevention:
HIRE TO RETIRE



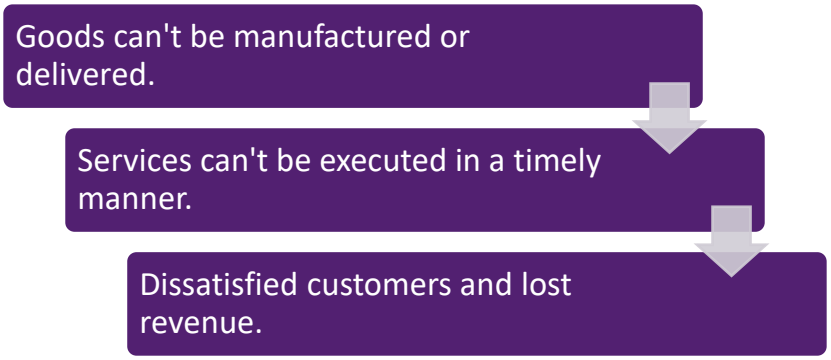
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Comprehensive Injury Prevention: Hire to Retire

Most companies with physically demanding jobs are frustrated with work-related injuries. When you look at the injury price tag it's painful. A lost time strain or sprain averages **$30-40K**. And if you dive into the indirect costs associated with the lost time, productivity, etc., you can double that amount, bringing the total cost of a single injury to **$60-80,000**. And if any of these injuries require hospitalization or surgery, the number quickly becomes six figures. Several of those lost time injuries per year along with the minor, medical only injuries, can have some serious implications for the bottom line.

For some companies, the lost productivity that accompanies injuries in the form of lost and restricted duty days is an even greater problem than the direct costs related to the injury itself.



Most companies try their best to prevent work-related injuries. Some try ergonomics and, or safety training. A handful of leading companies have a comprehensive approach for preventing injuries that spans from pre-hire to retire.

Elements of Comprehensive Injury Prevention

Injury Analysis – Before you start

Before you can select appropriate injury prevention programs, you need to have a good understanding of your current injuries. Different injury types and where they occur in the lifecycle of your employees is critical pre-program step to insure you select the right approach to the injuries.



- What type of injuries are most prevalent? Strains and sprains? Slips, trips and falls? Lacerations? Struck-by?
- What departments and jobs are causing most of the injuries?
- Are there specific locations where injuries are more prevalent?
- Are injuries occurring primarily among new hires or seasoned workers?
- How much are the injuries costing your company annually (3 to 5 years of data if possible)?

Take-Away: Knowing the answer to these questions, will help you focus your efforts and dollars on the right solutions rather than using a shotgun approach and hoping for the best.

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Job Analysis – Your Starting Point

Comprehensive injury prevention begins with a thorough knowledge of the physical requirements of the job. Most organizations have a job description, but the standard job description has very cursory information about the ***physical*** requirements of the job. For example, the typical job description might say, **"This job requires 50 lb. of lifting."**

The questions become:

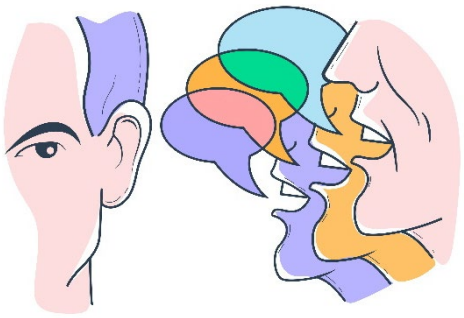
How high?

How many repetitions?

How often throughout the day?

And what are employees doing when they're not lifting? Are they sitting? Standing? Stooping? Reaching? How many repetitive is the work? How long are they required to maintain awkward positions? Which job tasks require the heaviest physical work?

Some companies rely on self-report from employees to determine the job requirements – they talk to front line workers who are doing the job or supervisors overseeing them. Oftentimes, your team won't agree when they self-report the amount of weight they are lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling, - they typically over or under-estimate depending on their own physical abilities. It's always best to objectively measure and value facts over opinion.



Job analysis is the foundation for an effective injury prevention program. It's important when you're:

- Trying to return injured or ill employees to work. It's hard to accommodate someone if you don't know what your jobs require.
- Granting permission for a transfer from one job to another. If the physical demands are not known, you won't know when an employee is asking to go from a lighter to a heavier job.
- Developing physical abilities tests to be used either at pre-hire/post-offer or return to work. How will you know what to test if you don't know the job requirements?
- Developing a light duty program or trying to accommodate an injured worker. How do you accommodate your employees and which jobs can they do if you don't know the physical requirements of the jobs?
- Having an employee go through a work conditioning program. How will the clinician know what to have the employee work on in therapy?
- Performing work for the federal government. The Office of Federal Contracting Compliance Programs (OFCCP) requires all federal contractors to have **"processes that provide for careful, thorough, systematic consideration of job requirements with a schedule for periodic review"** in order to make fair hiring decisions and reasonable accommodations.

Take-Away: Job analysis is the foundation of everything you do that involves injury prevention.

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Ergonomic Assessment and Countermeasures

Job analysis and ergonomic assessment can be done at the same time or independently. Job analysis defines the physical requirements of work. Ergonomic assessment identifies which of those physical requirements are creating hazards for injury.

Hazards present themselves in 4 primary forms:

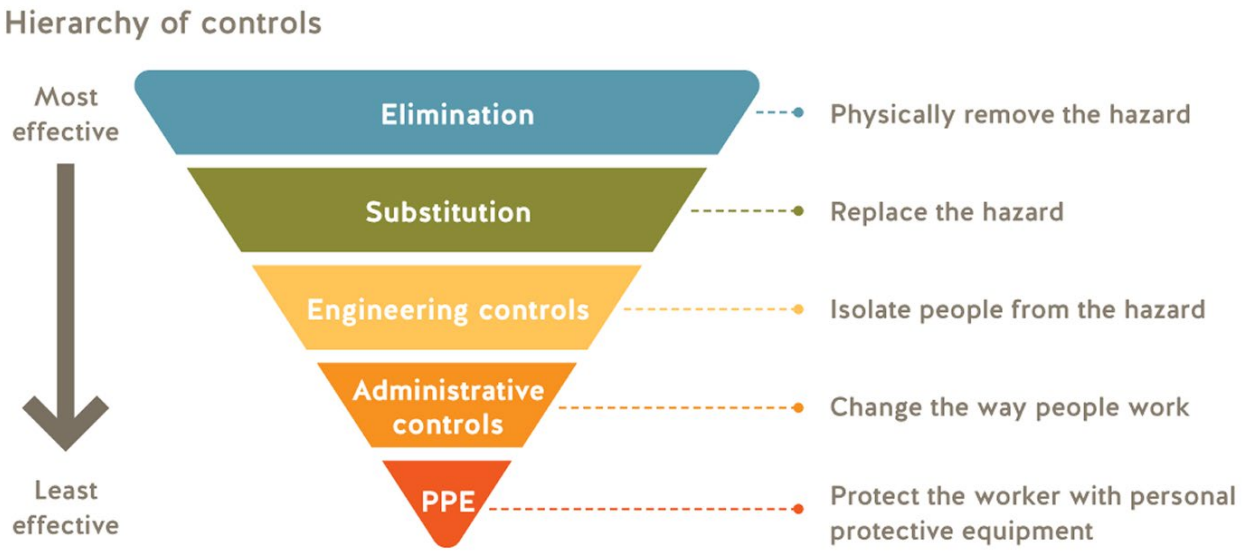
Excessive Force | High repetition | Awkward positions | Vibrations



Countermeasures include:

- Elimination of the hazard
- Replacing the hazard with another solution
- Isolating employees from the hazard
- Changing the way people work and protecting them with personal protective equipment (hard had, steel-toed shoes, gloves)

These counter measures range in effectiveness from PPE being the least effective (because it requires consistent application on the part of the employee) to elimination or substitution being the most effective.



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Chosing from among a variety of of options depends upon the extent of the risk caused by the hazard and the cost of the solution. ErgoScience helps employers identify the ergonomic hazards and the most *cost effective and feasible* solutions.

Takeaway: Adressing the hazards, if feasible, is a valuable second step.

Physical Abilities Testing

Physical Abilities Testing can be used at a variety of critical points in the lifecyle of the employee's tenure with an organization.



- ***Post-Offer/Pre-hire*** testing helps employers hire workers who are physically capable of performing their jobs.
- ***Post-Hire/Pre-placement*** testing allows employers with jobs across a broad spectrum of physical requirements to place employees according to their abilities.
- ***Pre-Transfer*** testing helps determine whether employees are physically capable of transferring from a lighter duty job to a heavier one.
- ***Fit-for-Duty*** testing allows employees to be tested if their supervisor feels they are struggling with the physical requirements of their job.
- ***Return-to-Work*** testing helps physicians, case managers and employers determine if the employee if physically ready to return-to-work.



Regardless of the point at which Physical Abilities Testing is used in the lifecycle of the worker, the test is answering the question: **Do the physical abilities of the worker match the physical requirements of the job?**



ErgoScience has multiple case studies showing that strains and sprains and slips, trips, and falls are reduced 50-75% in newly hired employees when doing pre-hire or pre-employment PAT. That number is even greater when employers are using the PAT throughout their employees' life cycle.

Take-Away: Matching the worker's physical ability to the physical requirements of the job is critical to having a comprehensive injury prevention program and creates a workforce who can truly benefit from your safety training.

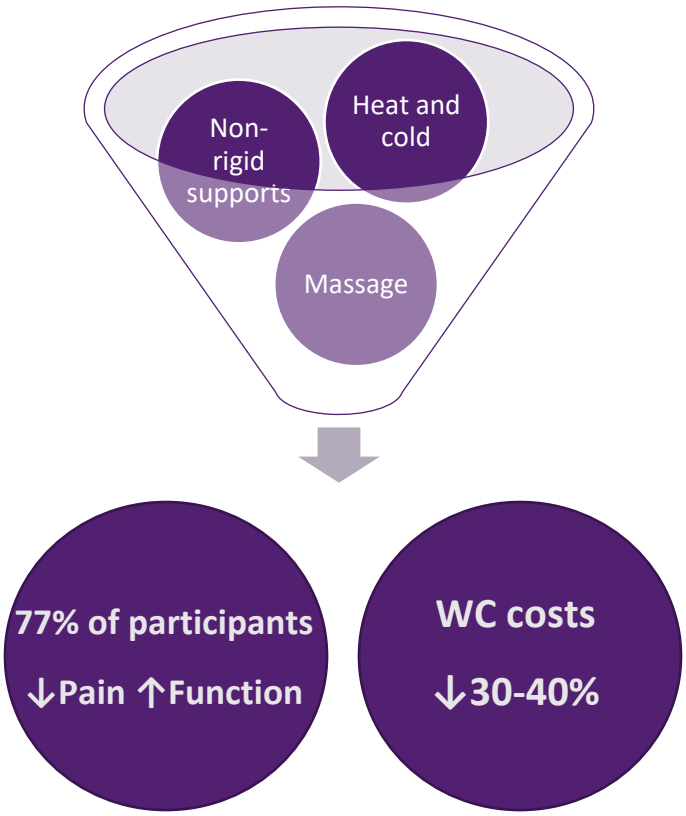
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OSHA-Compliant Early Intervention Programs

Despite everything you do to prevent injuries, jobs will cause discomfort and eventually lead to some lost time injuries. Why? Because a lot of jobs have requirements that are very heavy, or repetitive or put workers in awkward positions, regardless of what you do. **And human bodies can only take so much without breaking down.**

OSHA-Compliant Early Intervention Programs (also known as OSHA "first aid") are designed to counteract this wear and tear and prevent minor discomforts from becoming major recordable injuries.

According to OSHA, three interventions are considered first aid and do not turn a discomfort into a recordable – heat and cold, massage, and non-rigid supports (think sports or Kinesio tape).



The Early Intervention provider can also take the opportunity to talk to employees about ergonomic work practices that will minimize future stress on their bodies.

The program can be provided onsite at the workplace or at a nearby clinic. Case studies have shown that about **77%** of those who participated in the program decreased pain and improved their function. And work comp costs have been shown to decrease by as much as **30-40%** with the implementation of OSHA-Compliant Early Intervention.

Take-Away: The best way to prevent OSHA recordables in your existing workforce is to attack them early on.

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Summary and Key Take-Aways

- Understand the types and causes of your injuries.
- Job analysis is the foundation of your injury prevention program.
- Minimize the stress and strain of your jobs through ergonomics.
- Match your people to the jobs through Physical Abilities Testing.
- Intervene with Early Intervention to avoid OSHA recordables.

Take Action

Many organizations know their injury issues, but not knowing what to do – they do nothing. So, their injury problems fester and grow for years. Or perhaps they try one solution here and one solution there – with no appreciable change. Some pick the wrong solution for their problem. And for some implementing injury prevention solutions can feel complex and overwhelming.

There are several approaches you can take:

Good

- Pull an internal team together to develop your own program. However, some of our clients tell us that they tried this with only fair results at best.

Better

- Hire several firms with point solutions for each area. Some of our clients who tried this felt like they were herding cats - managing multiple vendors with little to no integration.

Best

- Hire ErgoScience to help you systematically implement the components of a comprehensive solution that is custom tailored to fit your needs. We are a one-stop shop, for hire to retire injury prevention programs that are easy to implement.

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As industry experts, we've seen it all.

So, no matter what your injury challenges are… we can help with that.



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