



AMERICAN

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OUR WAY

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Physical Therapist's Healing Hands Provide Pain Relief to Employees

Small changes can create big improvements. This is true in many aspects of work and life, but unless you have experienced joint or muscle pain, you may not have considered the long-term impact musculoskeletal issues such as bad posture can have on one's physical wellbeing. To help ACIPCO employees address pain related to on-the-job posture, Iron City Physical Therapy offers the Early Intervention Program (EIP).

The EIP is offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Ductile Iron Pipe conference room and Steel Pipe QA office. In addition to personalized guidance, the program includes OSHA-approved interventions such as hot/cold packs, massage, taping and ergonomic coaching. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are encouraged. To make an appointment, contact a physical therapist at 205-278-2250.

Nearly 80% of employees who use the EIP experience a reduction in pain within 3-5 visits. After six visits, if the pain is serious enough, patients are referred to a physical therapist or physician for further treatment. Below is the experience of two employees who have found success with the EIP.

Reggie Harris' Story

Steel Pipe Tool Attendant Reggie Harris learned about the Early Intervention Program from flyers he read in the cafeteria and Steel Pipe. One morning, his shoulders began to ache after he lifted heavy equipment and paint buckets.

"My upper back, shoulders and arms were sore and had gotten stiff," Harris said. "I heard stories from others in Steel Pipe about Donna 'Healing Hands' Johnston working out all the kinks in your muscles. And in that moment, I knew some healing hands were just what I needed."

Harris called the Iron City Physical Therapy number and booked his 30-minute appointment. After meeting Physical Therapist Assistant Donna Johnston in the Steel Pipe QA office, he stretched across the examination table. Johnston began the session by asking Harris a few questions to gauge his pain and proceeded to give him soft tissue massages in the culprit areas.

"Using my elbow enables me to get into a client's tight, knotted muscles," Johnston said. "My clients joke about the process with me and beg me to not use my elbow because they say it can hurt a little, at first. But a few minutes later, they thank me."

Another tool in a physical therapist's toolbox is called "cupping." To further relieve Harris' back and arms, Johnston arranged plastic cups along her client's body. She then pumped the air from the cups, suctioning them to the skin.



Employees companywide are familiar with Iron City physical therapist assistant Donna Johnston's abilities.



Plastic cups used for cupping massage are placed along the arm of Steel Pipe Tool Attendant Reggie Harris.

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Early Intervention Program (Continued from Page 1)

"Cupping is a great way to increase blood flow throughout the body," Johnston said. "The vacuum created in the cups lifts the skin, enabling me to drag the cups and give a deep, soft tissue massage that is more effective than when I use my hands alone."

Sue Crocker's Experience

The Early Intervention Program is not only for manufacturing employees. Desk-based employees also find benefit from visits with a physical therapist. The program is helping DIP Clerk Sue Crocker ease pain in aggravated muscles and prevent issues in her lower back, neck and shoulders.



"My job requires me to sit at a desk for most of the day," Crocker said. "To address my lower back pain, my physical therapist has taught me a couple of ACIPCO-approved counter-strain stretches to relieve my hamstring and improve my posture. Heated packs, cupping and soft tissue massages have also given me long-lasting relief, allowing me to focus more on the job."

Ben Allen's Recovery Journey After Surgery

Ben Allen's knee had finally given up on him, he thought. His doctor had done all he could do to alleviate Allen's knee pain and recommended replacement surgery. After deciding to get the surgery and speaking with friends about the recovery process, Allen knew therapy was in his future.



"My wife Wanda has worked with ACIPCO [in AFC Sales] for 54 years and is knowledgeable about the programs and services offered at AMERICAN Wellness" Ben Allen said.

"She recommended I try out Iron City Physical Therapy and see what they could do for me."

When Ben started therapy, his physical therapists Matt Homan and Ali Grohoske placed him on a stationary bike to measure his recovery. To do this, they had him push the pedals as far as he could without hurting himself. Then, they measured the degree of the angle to which his knee could bend. Once Homan and Grohoske assisted Allen with therapeutic exercises and stretches, Ben was able to bend his knee 104 degrees, surpassing his doctor's expectation of 90 degrees.

"At first, I could barely walk into therapy with a walker, and I was unable to make a full cycle with the bike pedals," he said. "But after doing all the exercises and stretches for six weeks, I was able to use the stationary bike without help."

Allen's therapy did not end in the office. It continued with at-home exercises.

"My therapists Matt and Ali are both good and caring people," Ben said. "They wrote an exercise guide for me to use at home. I've bragged about the service I received, and now, I feel like I am part of their family."

Iron City Physical Therapy provides one-on-one, hands-on personalized treatment. Free services are available to employees for personal and work-related injuries. Iron City treats spouses and dependents for a \$10 copay for those on the Traditional Medical Plan. No doctor's referral is necessary for an evaluation.

Appointments are available Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. To schedule an appointment at Iron City's on-site clinic, call 205-278-2250. To learn more, visit <https://www.ironcitypt.com>.