



Make It Your Job To Stay Healthy At Work

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You do not have to perform what is considered “backbreaking work” to get injured on the job. Workplace hazards are not restricted to construction sites, chemical labs, manufacturing plants, or warehouses. Dangers, with varying degrees of severity, exist everywhere, and can even affect people who work in office settings. For those whose jobs require sitting at desks or working with computers everyday, where the effects of prolonged positions and movements intensify over time with repetition and long hours, it is important for your health and safety to pay attention to such things as posture, obstacles, and lifting techniques. The following tips will reduce your risk of: overexerting muscles; stretching tendons, blood vessels, and nerves over ligaments or bone, where they can become pinched and restricted and cause painful disorders including carpal tunnel syndrome; and falling or tripping, causing sprains and other injuries.

Sitting Suggestions

Neutral body positioning, according to the United States Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), is a comfortable working posture in which your joints are naturally aligned, reducing stress and strain on the muscles, tendons, and skeletal system. To do this, make sure your hands, wrists, and forearms are straight and approximately parallel to the floor with your shoulders relaxed, upper arms hanging at the side of your body, and elbows close to the body and bent between 90 and 120 degrees. Your head should be level and in-line with the torso, and your back should lean back slightly. Knees should be at about the same height as your hips, and feet should be supported by the floor or a footrest. Even if you sit the “right” way, your body was not made to be a statue, and prolonged periods of time in the same

posture will stiffen your muscles and joints. So, make small adjustments to your position and stretch or stand and walk around for a few minutes periodically.

Office Obstacles

You may not see your file cabinet or telephone and computer cables as bodily threats, but if you are rushing or preoccupied as you move about your office, they could get in your way and cause injury. Eliminate tripping hazards by keeping your floor and walkway clear of cables, boxes, etc., and close drawers before getting up or walking away from your file cabinet. Do not multitask and read while you walk; always look where you are going and avoid obstructing your view by carrying loads higher than eye level. Also, watch for unsafe conditions such as burned-out lights, faulty equipment, loose steps, torn carpet, etc. and immediately report them to your supervisor.

Lifting Tips

Before picking up a box or case, check the weight of the object so you can prepare to lift it properly. For heavy or bulky items, it is important for employees to help each other or to use assistance with a dolly or cart. If something is light enough to lift on your own, bend your legs and use your leg muscles to do the lifting, keep your back straight and the item close to your body, and lift smoothly without jerking. When turning, turn with your feet and body to avoid twisting at the waist.

Occupational Health Service at Sturdy Memorial Hospital

Occupational Health Service (OHS) at Sturdy Memorial Hospital has worked with businesses to keep their employees healthy for over 29 years, making it the oldest hospital-based occupational health service in the state. OHS offers comprehensive occupational medicine services including: injury management, physical exams, audiograms, drug screening, and medical surveillance. On-site services include influenza vaccination clinics and wellness programs. For more information, call the department at **508-236-7500**.