

April Is National Occupational Therapy Month

Workplace injury, illness, and death consistently contribute high costs to the healthcare burden of the U.S. One study suggested it added \$171 billion. As employers or employees, it is important how a culture of safety manifests itself throughout the entire organization. All jobs, regardless of risk, should be continually reevaluated to ensure each task is being accomplished with the highest degree of safety in mind.

Is the chair someone sits in encouraging good posture? Are the ergonomics of the computer station avoiding repetitive motion injuries or carpal tunnel syndrome? Do employees lift with their backs or their knees? Does the company supply the appropriate personal protective devices for the exposures encountered? These are only a few of the many questions that could be asked when assessing workplace safety.

In this issue of *The Core* you will find a multitude of Web sites to aid in your research. Please continue to encourage worksite safety: Employers, listen to those employees who might have ideas to improve job processes; employees, do not be afraid to speak up!

CDC: Emergency Preparedness and Response
www.bt.cdc.gov

EPA: Guide to Molds and Moisture
www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/moldguide.html

National Center for Environmental Health: This site has chemical exposure information, advice for managing hazardous materials incidents, as well as a list of emergency preparedness links.
www.cdc.gov/nceh/default.htm

United States Consumer Product Safety Commission: This independent federal regulatory agency helps to reduce the risk of injury or death from consumer products. It can be contacted to inquire about or report unsafe products and has a special section for children's safety.
www.cpsc.gov

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): The EPA site has many links on its home page to sites with useful information.
www.epa.gov

Federal Consumer Information Center: This agency provides useful information about product safety and a current list of product recalls.
www.pueblo.gsa.gov

Occupational Safety and Health Administration
www.osha.gov

Minimize Nagging Injuries

Protect yourself at home *and* work from nagging aches and pains.

When sitting at a computer:

- ◆ The top of the monitor is at or just below eye level.
- ◆ Your head is centered and balanced; you should be able to draw a vertical line from your earlobe down your neck, to the middle of your shoulder.
- ◆ Shoulders are pulled back and relaxed.
- ◆ Elbows are tucked in to the ribs, supported by arm rests, and at the same level as the wrists and hands.
- ◆ Lower back is supported. Add a rolled-up towel or pillow for extra support if your chair is not adequate.
- ◆ Feet are flat on the floor.

Adapted from www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/

When lifting manageable objects:

- ◆ Stand close to the item in a wide stance, with one foot slightly forward and beside the object.
- ◆ Use your legs and hips to lower yourself toward the object. Keep your back straight by sticking your buttocks out.
- ◆ Place one hand (same side as the forward foot) on the outer-most portion of the item. The other hand should be on the opposite corner of the first. Grasp the object firmly.
- ◆ Hold the item close to your body. Look forward and breathe in.
- ◆ Push upward with your legs, back straight and buttocks out, following your head and shoulders. Breathe out as you lift.

Adapted from www.cdc.gov/od/ohs/Ergonomics/indusergo.htm