



Evolution of Ergonomics – Survival of the Fittest...

Soft Tissue Injury (STI)/Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI) Prevention Week
September 27 - October 3, 2009

The idea of a safety culture is one that has evolved with our understanding of ergonomics – and it is an idea we must continue to evolve on our path to health and wellness.

Safety culture is about improving safety attitudes in people. It is also about taking a holistic approach to safety management and exchanging experiences between our workplaces and our communities.

Even those organizations with very strong safety cultures will admit preventing these types of injuries requires constant vigilance and an ongoing effort. However, organizations which incorporate ergonomics fundamentals and principles into their safety cultures are much more likely to prevent soft tissue/musculoskeletal injuries.

Leadership commitment is the critical first step in developing strong safety cultures. If senior and front-line management do not buy into MSI prevention, engagement and prevention at the employee level is difficult. All workplace stakeholders must work together – affecting a change in safety culture starts at the top.

When safety culture is entrenched in the workplace, safety becomes second nature and something so natural we don't consciously have to think about – it is just part of what we do, how we do it and who we are.

When sound ergonomics principles are part of the safety culture, we will see people working more safely and thinking about body mechanics, load weight and positioning in an attempt to prevent soft tissue/musculoskeletal injuries. Once these behaviours become workplace norms, people will work in ways that will dramatically reduce – if not eliminate – MSIs.

And they may even take their smarter, more safety-conscious habits home with them, helping to ensure these types of injuries do not happen off the job or at play, to them or to their families.

Together, we can make this evolution a revolution!

