

Stretching? Are You Pulling My Leg??

As we wind up another year in ergonomics and we warm up for what is to come in 2014.....let's take some time and review the fundamental principles of good warm up and stretching practices.

Warm up and stretching routines better prepare the muscles and tissues of our body to tackle the physical demands that our tasks require of us. The warm up portion is designed to increase circulation to the major muscle groups of the body. This is especially important in material handling jobs where the muscle tissues are taxed or when working in colder conditions where muscle tissues are constricted and tight. Good warm up moves include marching, shoulder rotations, half squats, or slow and controlled boxing moves. These types of warm up activities will prepare the muscles and joints of the body for efficient and safe movement patterns.

Stretching is best incorporated after blood flow is increased to the tissues. Think of your muscles like a rubber band. If you warm them up first, they'll stretch easier and further. Stretching is a controlled movement and abrupt movements like bouncing are not recommended. When stretching a muscle you want to hold the muscles in an elongated position for a few seconds and then slowly relax the muscle returning it to the original starting position. Only mild tension should be felt. If you're experiencing pain, STOP! You're pushing too far. Stretching is not supposed to be painful.

Job tasks and work environments are variable. As a result warm up actions and stretching activities can be incorporated throughout the course of the day rather than just at the beginning of the shift. We refer to these momentary breaks in work as "microbreaks".

For example, if you have to assume a stooped posture for an extended period of time, stretching in the opposite direction by performing a back extension will assist with counterbalancing the effects of the sustained stooped posture.



Reaching in front all day (yes, you at the computer)? Clasp the hands behind the back and squeeze the shoulders together. Really, it's that simple!

As we move into 2014 it is important that we warm up to the notion of the importance of stretching and microbreaks as yet another tool to assist with injury prevention within the workforce!

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"Touch those toes Clark...you know what happened last time you leapt out the window without stretching"

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Office Ergonomics Workshop

Calgary	February 5, 2014
Edmonton	February 6, 2014
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Vancouver	May 14, 2014

Ergonomics Systems Specialist

Vancouver	March 17-21, 2014
Edmonton	June 2-6, 2014

Stretching Boot Camp

Edmonton	February 7, 2014
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Stretching Boot Camp

This 1 day workshop will help your company implement a successful warm-up and stretching program with the goal of reducing work related musculoskeletal injuries.

Participants will become competent leaders of your on-site program, as well as advocates of microbreak and other musculoskeletal injury prevention strategies.

Our content is based on the latest science and physiological research available. Emphasis is on learning correct technique and choosing the right stretches relevant to working postures and the specific job demands placed on the body. Not all stretches are good stretches!

Click on the link above to register for our next course. We also offer in-house workshops. For more information, contact us at 1-888-568-4615.

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