Ergonomics and Preventing Injuries

Ergonomics can roughly be defined as the study of people in their working environment. An ergonomist (pronounced like economist) designs or modifies the work to fit the worker, not the other way around. The goal is to eliminate discomfort and risk of injury due to work. In other words, the employee is our first priority in analyzing a workstation.

Ergonomics (or human factors) is the scientific discipline concerned with the understanding of the interactions among human and other elements of a system, and the profession that applies theory, principles, data and methods to design in order to optimize human well-being and overall system performance.

Workers come in all different sizes. Ergonomics can help make the work more comfortable for the individual worker. Ergonomics is important because when you’re doing a job and your body is stressed by an awkward posture, extreme temperature, or repeated movement your musculoskeletal system is affected. Your body may begin to have symptoms such as fatigue, discomfort, and pain, which can be the first signs of a musculoskeletal disorder.

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are conditions that affect your body’s muscles, joints, tendons, ligaments, and nerves. MSDs can develop over time or can occur immediately due to overload. Repetitive use injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, and low back pain can be caused by poor ergonomics.

Investing in the right chairs, consoles, and other items for your staff will minimize injuries, workers compensation claims, and other liabilities associated with poor ergonomics in the workplace. When staff are comfortable, not injured, and have quality equipment to use, they feel valued and have greater morale. When you invest in the workplace for your employees to have proper ergonomics, they are more productive, incur less injuries, and take less sick time all of which translates to more profitability for your business.