Pinnacol Pointers
for Safety Group Programs

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Contact: Mindy Carrothers (303.361.4790, mindy.carrothers@pinnacol.com)

Improve Ergonomics to Reduce Worker Strain Injuries

Did you realize that musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are among the most frequently reported causes of lost or restricted work time? According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, MSD cases accounted for 31 percent of all worker injury and illness cases in 2015.

MSDs comes into play whenever soft-tissue strain results from improper or repetitive body movements, as well as lack of motion.

What to Do

Working over long periods of time in awkward postures without taking breaks can greatly increase your employees' risk for musculoskeletal injuries. Proper workstation setup and layout, good fit with a quality task chair and posture changes throughout the day are the most effective ways to reduce the risk of overuse injuries. Reorganizing work so employees can stand and walk every 30 to 45 minutes, for example, is a no-cost approach to reduce the effects of sitting in a static posture.

What Not to Do

Look for these common awkward postures at your employees' workstations and inform workers of these risk factors for injury:

- Working in a seated, static position for more than 30 minutes without standing or walking.
- Sitting so far forward in a chair that the back is unsupported or, worse, slouching forward over the keyboard.
- Working with elbows extended in front of the body, which creates muscle tension in the upper back.
- Cradling the phone for long periods while performing keyboard/mouse work.
- Entering data from a document that is face down on the desk, requiring awkward neck flexion or twisting.
- Placing contact stress on soft tissues, such as resting wrists on a hard, sharp desktop edge while using a computer mouse.

Pinnacol Resources

Pinnacol is here to educate policyholders and improve the ergonomic setup and layout of your computer workstations. Visit the Knowledge Center on Pinnacol's website to

view our interactive office ergonomics video. A host of additional downloads – FAQs; guidelines for choosing an ergonomic chair and workstation setup, a stretching and warm-up exercise handout, and equipment procurement and use checklists – can help prevent musculoskeletal strains and injuries to your workers. You can order a computer DVD copy of the interactive video program from Pinnacol's Order Materials webpage under the DVD Training & Resources section. Your organization can make copies of the DVD and distribute them to employees or even copy the files to your organization's intranet.

Pinnacol partners with Office Relief, an ergonomic chairs and accessories supplier with discounted prices for Pinnacol customers. Office Relief offers one-stop shopping for purchasing high-quality task chairs, sit/stand workstations, keyboards, mice and various other desk accessories to improve the ergonomic setup of the workstation. Contact Office Relief's Jeff Bellamy at (720) 232.5637 or jbellamy@officerelief.com. Identify yourself as a Pinnacol customer to receive a product catalog with Pinnacol's preferred pricing. Bellamy provides onsite services, as well, such as free chair demos.

You can also contact Pinnacol's Safety On Call online or at 303.361.4700 or 888.501.4752. Our Safety Services team is committed to helping you keep your organization's employees healthy, productive and injury-free.

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