

Occupational Medicine Newsletter

9th Issue, February 2009
www.tcohr.com

Positive Results for Patient's and Employers!

Occupational Medicine Clinic Closings

As long-time occupational medicine clinics such as North Memorial and Park Nicollet close, TCOHR's staff and systems have geared-up to accommodate your needs as an employer as well as those of your employees.

Because all we do is occupational medicine, our commitment to communicate with you promptly and professionally remains steadfast.

Our drug and alcohol testing as well as injury care remains available on a walk-in basis. We do continue to ask you to schedule physicals, audiometry and pulmonary function testing (spirometry).

Please remember to let us know if an injured employee is treated at another clinic or hospital. With an information release form, we can have those records transferred from the urgent care or emergency room where they were seen, in order to ensure continuity of care and data; especially important when restrictions need to be reevaluated or when physical therapy may be appropriate.

We truly value your selection of Twin Cities Occupational Health & Rehabilitation, and

we welcome all of the employers who have found their way to us these past weeks. Please

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let us know how we're doing. It's fun to share your feedback with our team!

TCOHR Enters Our 4th Year!

February 13th 2006 was opening day for the Mendota Heights TCOHR clinic. We have grown to a two-clinic operation serving

employers from around the nation.

We remember that we could not have grown without your partnership!

Upper Trapezius Stretch

This is the second article featuring a "stretching exercise" that can be easily performed at work.

Shoulder and neck strains & sprains are a common injury resulting from overuse, static postures and overhead work. Fatigue can also result in discomfort. The neck & upper trapezius is often the site of discomfort resulting from stress & headaches.

Stretching to the left, place the left arm behind your lower back. Use your other hand to gently pull your head in the opposite direction.

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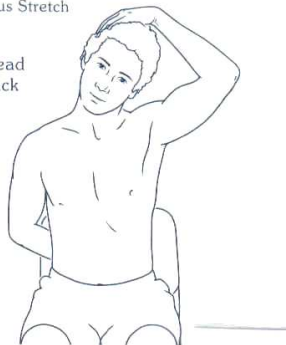
Posters with tear-off maps
are still available!

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CERVICAL SPINE

Flexibility: Upper Trapezius Stretch

Gently grasp
RIGHT / LEFT side of head
while reaching behind back
with other hand.
Tilt head away
until a gentle
stretch is felt.



You should feel a stretch from the middle of your neck out towards your shoulder. Hold the stretch for a count of 5 and then relax. Switch sides to stretch both directions.

Stretch a couple times each shift and try and keep a positive attitude.

Musculoskeletal Exams

Have you ever hired someone only to find out that they have significant physical limitations that keep them from performing critical components of their job?

Pre-employment (medical) physicals are excellent for identifying current or underlying medical conditions, and Kraus-Weber back exam's are a fast and easy way to assess the functional status of the core muscles. But for employees who are expected to climb, crawl, lift, carry, reach, push or pull, a functional 'Musculoskeletal Exam' may be your best option to ensure the physical capability of a job candidate.

Like an HPE (Human Performance Evaluation) which is an ADA – compliant exam based upon a functional job description, a simple Musculoskeletal Exam is performed in our Physical Therapy center.

A Musculoskeletal Exam simply reports any physical findings such as joint laxity, weakness, balance, flexibility and strength, rather than a statement of "fitness for duty."

Musculoskeletal Exams bill at \$30 / 10 minutes, with an average exam completed within a 10 – 15 minute time frame.

So, if you do not yet have Functional Job Descriptions for certain jobs but need to be sure you hire individuals in sound physical condition, consider the Musculoskeletal Exam as another option in your H.R. toolkit.

Materials Handling

Excerpted from "Ergonomic eTools"

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/electricalcontractors/materials/heavy.html#Environmental%20Factors>

Pushing vs Pulling: Pushing allows a person to use large muscle groups and apply more force to the load. Pulling carries a greater risk of strain and injury.

Use the Power Zone: The power zone for lifting is close to the body, between mid-thigh and mid-chest height. This zone is where arms and the back can lift the most with the least amount of effort.

Staging: Proper staging includes placing materials as close as possible to work spaces, and storing materials at ideal heights so employees can utilize the power zone to take materials from storage.

Task Rotation: Many stressors cannot be engineered out of a task, short of complete automation. Rotation of assignments can be an effective means of limiting the amount of time employees are exposed to stressors.

Handholds: Proper handholds make lifting easier and reduce the risk of injury. Handholds should be made large enough to accommodate larger hands and should not dig into fingers and palms.

Flu rates continue to climb. Vaccine is still available on a walk-in basis!