

ACTIVE WORKING SOLUTIONS

1998 - 2008: 10 Years Experience in OHS, Injury Management & Training™

what's
inside

INSIGHT

*Active Working Solutions Complimentary Newsletter
Keeping you updated on health, safety and training in the workplace*

Workers Reap Benefits of New Posture Program

A new posture program which utilizes a recently developed posture retraining tool called BackTone has not only achieved the desired improvements in posture for its participants, but reduced their symptoms as well.

The program was initially conducted as a pilot study for eight staff of a south east Qld hospital. Participants were fitted with a BackTone Posture Corrector. They wore the BackTone for about 20 minutes at a time, twice daily for 4 weeks. Their posture and symptoms were rated at commencement, at conclusion and at 6 months following completion of the program.

All eight participants improved their posture considerably. In addition, they each reduced symptoms including headaches, and pain in the neck, shoulder, arm, upper back or lower back. At the six month follow up, five of the eight achieved even further improvements and all had maintained progress since commencement.

The program was so successful it has been repeated a number of times to meet staff demand and is still ongoing.

The BackTone 4000 is a biofeedback device developed by Occupational Therapist, Lorraine Josey. Lorraine said she was delighted with the outcomes of the pilot study. "The program enables people to make a real and positive impact on their health and well being. At the end of the 4 weeks, participants not only feel good – but they look fit and healthy as well" Lorraine said. "Evidence is building that good posture enhances physical abilities and reduces pain and other symptoms. Our hope is that by changing our clients' habitual postural and teaching them how to manage posture we will reduce risk of future problems for these people." Lorraine said.

The pilot study has now led to a major research project for AWS Occupational Therapist Jacqui Keys. Jacqui will be looking at posture retraining using biofeedback and in particular BackTone, through a PhD research program at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Jacqui is interested in replicating the success of the posture program at other workplaces. She can be contacted at AWS for further details as the approach can be incorporated into wellness or manual handling programs.

Biggest Corporate Loser Program Winners

Individual Winner: David Mifsud achieved a 14.37% reduction in his total weight.

Team Winner: Mackay Consolidated Industries lost a total of 31.5 kilograms in 10 weeks! They achieved a 36% reduction of weight against their team goal

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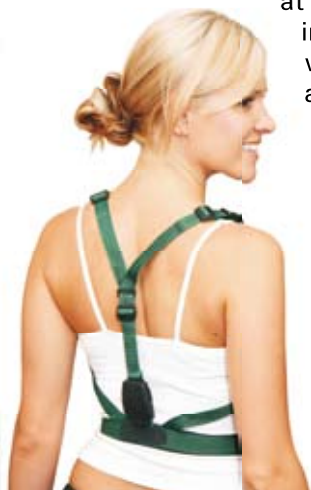
How To Get The Most From Your Biggest Asset?

Initially, AWS began assisting injured workers in their return to work by arranging suitable duties or retraining/and or job placement in the event the person did not return to pre-injury duties.

In 2003, as part of a commitment to ongoing professional development, AWS became a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). As a result the training offered has expanded and AWS has also developed training services to include many customised programs.

Today, AWS has evolved into a one stop shop for all HR matters. Being an RTO has also allowed AWS to increase skills at the middle management level for some of our corporate clients' businesses in Front Line Management at no cost as AWS has been able to arrange full Government funding.

Contact Jacqui for information on our drinks for our 10th birthday on 14th November 2008.



Biomechanics of Manual Handling

Biomechanics: The science concerned with the action of forces, internal or external, on the living body (Hamill, J & Knutzen, M, 2003)

Posture: The human body is made up of series of muscles, ligaments, joints and bones which are used in different movements. These components work together to perform movements however can become stressed if high/frequent/prolonged amounts of force are required; posture determines the efficiency of movement and stress imposed upon the spine.

Forces that act upon the spine include:

- body weight
- tension in the spinal ligaments
- tension in surrounding muscles
- intra-abdominal pressure
- applied external loads

Erect postural muscles hold the responsibility for maintaining posture, but if you slouch this responsibility is passed on to smaller ligaments and capsules which are weaker. Different kinds of movement involve, and are limited by, different mechanisms. A slow muscle contraction found in lifting a heavy object, or an isometric contraction in supporting a

weight for a few seconds both involve the exertion of great muscle force.

Prolonged sitting can compress the discs in the lumbar spine for short periods and it is therefore important



to have periodic changes of position. This can be achieved by standing up, stretching and walk around every 30 minutes. The following table shows the pressure on vertebral discs (L3) with different activities in a person weighing 70kg.

Activity	Load on Disc (N)
Standing	686
Walking	833
Upright Sitting	980
Coughing	1078
Jumping	1078
Laughing	1176
Lifting 20kg, back straight, knees bent	2058
Lifting 20kg, back bent, knees straight	3332

Adapted from Nachemson, A (1976). Lumbar intradiscal pressure. In: M. Jayson (Ed). The Lumbar Spine & Back Pain. Kent: Pitman Medical.

Ergonomics: Involves the design of appliances, technical systems, and the workplace in such a way as to improve human performance, comfort, safety and health. (Hamill, J & Knutzen, M, 2003)

Ergonomic research and principles are used to develop guidelines for work station design, posture and manual handling.

Tips for Good Posture

Good posture is the foundation of a pain-free back. By maintaining the spine's natural curves the body's weight is balanced, there is minimal stress and strain on the spine and the muscles around the spine are in a strong, balanced position.

1. Sit correctly: When sitting, you should: place your buttocks right back in the seat. Adjust the height of the backrest so that the lumbar support fits snugly into the curve of your lower back. Sit with both feet flat on the floor. Vary this position occasionally by sitting forward,

away from the backrest, or by tilting the seat down.

2. Stretches: Never sit too long. Stand up, stretch and walk around every 30 minutes or so. Stretch back (sitting): clasp hands and stretch, palms up, towards the ceiling. Allow the backrest to support you.

- Chin tuck: keeping your eyes level, gently pull your chin in, lengthening the back of your neck. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Relax and repeat 3 times.
- Stretch back (standing): if you've been sitting for a long time, your spine gets stiff. Place palms on back of pelvis below waist. Gently bend backwards a few times to decrease pressure build up in discs.
- Spinal Rotation: gently rotate your upper body to the left and the right using the backrest for support.
- Knee tuck: grasp your shin and curl your back, drawing your nose toward your knee.
- Shoulder rolls: roll your shoulders up towards your ears, back, together, and down- squeezing briefly between your shoulder blades. Relax and repeat.
- With your arm outstretched, gently pull the back of your hand towards you, stretching the underside of your forearm. Hold for 10 seconds and release. Repeat with the other hand.

Active Working Solutions have the team and skills necessary to assist with developing good posture in an ergonomic and manual handling environment. Contact us to organise your workplace assessment or workshop. We also have excellent posters for the workplace.

Workers Have High Rates of 'Psychological Distress'

Nearly five percent of employees have high levels of psychological distress associated with a high likelihood of a mental disorder, reports a study in the July Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, official publication of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM).

Led by Michael F. Hilton, Ph.D., of The University of Queensland, Australia, the study was based on a survey of more than 60,500 full-time employees of 58 Australian companies. Workers anonymously completed the "Kessler 6" questionnaire, which asked how often they felt sad, nervous, hopeless, etc. Scores of 13 or higher (on a 24-point scale) indicated high psychological distress, with a high likelihood of a mental disorder.

Overall, 4.5 percent of the employees had high psychological distress. Another 9.6 percent had moderate psychological distress (score of 8 to 12), indicating a "possible" mental disorder.

Just 22 percent of workers with high psychological distress were currently receiving treatment for a mental health condition. Another 29 percent said they had a mental disorder but had never sought treatment, while 31 percent denied having any problem.

Workers in sales positions were at greatest risk of high psychological distress: 5.6 percent of men and 7.5 percent of women. Workers expected to work long hours (60 or more per week) also had high rates of psychological distress.

Another risk factor was working in "non-traditional gender roles"—for example, women who worked as equipment operators or labourers and for men who worked in clerical or administrative jobs. Marital separation and low education were also linked to high psychological distress.

Corporate occupational health and safety (OH&S) programs are increasingly taking an active approach to prevention, screening, and early treatment of physical health problems in workers. However, companies have been less proactive in identifying and providing treatment for workers with mental health problems. Despite extensive evidence showing the high rates and costs of mental health disorders in the workplace, many employers have the perception that their employees are somehow "immune" to such problems.

The new study—using methods familiar to OH&S professionals and managers— demonstrates a high rate of psychological distress in the working population. The risk factors identified may help in targeting groups of workers at high risk of psychological distress and mental health problems. "Employers need to focus health resources on a common, debilitating, largely untreated illness group that substantially reduces employee productivity at work, increases absences from work, and increases employee attrition," Dr. Hilton and colleagues write.

AWS can assist organisations to implement a Corporate Wellness Program to enhance and vitalise their staff and business. Give us a call or review our website for more information.

Source: *Wolters Kluwer Health: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins via Newswise.*



Profile

Name:
Rebecca Spain
Position:
Human Resources Manager
Company:
DealsDirect.com



What does your company do?
We are an on-line retailer, with over 4000 products through 27 categories. Currently named for the fourth year running Australia's No.1 Online Department Store.

What do you love most about your role?
I love working with people, people are fantastic. I also love to make a difference by implementing new ideas, processes and programs.

Can you share an embarrassing moment?
I have so many embarrassing moments because I am so clumsy. The one that springs to mind is one of my falls, I was travelling on the long term car parking bus, my legs were crossed and my foot was resting against my 30kg suitcase. As we rounded a corner, the suitcase fell and as my foot was resting on it, I rolled right off the chair onto the floor.

Can you share 1 tip?
Your attitude to life is your choice, it is the only thing that no one can control or take away, every day you decide! Everything in life comes down to choice and it's these choices, especially the small ones that shape our future.

How does AWS make a difference to your organisation?
AWS has been able to provide our company with training in all different areas of OHS to assist with ensuring our company the happy, safe workplace that we aim for. The service is always fantastic and the training is of the highest quality. We will continue using AWS for all our OHS training needs.

Upcoming AWS Training

WorkCover Accredited Courses

- Return to Work Co-ordinator
- Senior First Aid
- OHS Construction Induction (Green/White Card)

Computer Courses

- Microsoft Suite – Intro, Intermediate & Advanced
- Word
- Excel
- Access
- PowerPoint
- Introduction to Computers
- Introduction to Email and Internet

Corporate Onsite Training

- Compassion Fatigue
- Stress Management
- Fire Warden and Fire Extinguisher
- Management Development
- Manual Handling
- Team Effectiveness

Corporate Onsite Accredited Training and Distance Learning

- Certificate III in Business
- Certificate IV in Business (Frontline Management)
- Certificate IV in Business (Occupational Health & Safety)
- Certificate IV in Aged Care

Government Funded Training

- Certificate III & IV in Aged Care Work
- Certificate III & IV in Disability Work

AWS has a wealth of knowledge and experience in a variety of areas, and is constantly developing new and innovative training courses and workshops. AWS has developed a partnership with a fantastic company that specialises in teaching people to re-energise, refocus and use their time and efforts in a powerful way. Interested in knowing more? Please contact our Training Manager on 1300 132 990 for further information.

Work-life balance - Ways to restore harmony and reduce stress

If your work life and personal life are out of balance, your stress may be running high. Here's how to reclaim control.

Finding work-life balance in today's frenetically paced world is no simple task.

Spend more time at work than at home, and you miss out on a rewarding personal life. Then again, when you face challenges in your personal life, such as caring for an aging parent or coping with marital problems, concentrating on your job can be difficult.

Whether the problem is too much focus on work or too little, when your work life and your personal life feel out of balance, stress – along with its harmful effects – is the result.

The good news is that you can take control of your work-life balance – and give yourself the

time to do the things that are most important to you. The first step is to recognize how the world of work has changed. Then you can evaluate your relationship to work and apply some specific strategies for striking a healthier balance.

Remember, striking a work-life balance isn't a one-shot deal. Creating balance in your life is a continuous process. Demands on your time change as your family, interests and work life change. Assess your situation every few months to make sure you're keeping on track.

Balance doesn't mean doing everything. Examine your priorities and set boundaries. Be firm in what you can and cannot do. Only you can restore harmony to your lifestyle.

Introducing Michelle Lorking (Occupational Therapist)



I'm 25, and have lived in the Macarthur area for most of my life. I completed my degree in Occupational Therapy in 2004, and have since worked in the public health system in both aged care and rehab, and physical disability services.

The areas I have gained expertise in during my experience in public health include home modifications, specialised wheelchair and seating prescription, assessment of function in daily living activities, pressure care, and physical disabilities including spinal cord injuries.

Outside of work, I enjoy a variety of activities including spending time with my puppy 'Missy', making jewellery, wakeboarding (in summer), shopping, travelling, and spending time with family and friends. I am also very much involved with my local church.

I have only just recently started with AWS in injury management, and I am enjoying the experience of learning new skills as well as utilising my pre-existing skills in a different area.

Ergonomic Tip: 20/20/20 Rule

When working long periods in front of your monitor take an eye break every 20 minutes and look 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Source: Ergo Interest Group