Ergonomic Services

The Ergonomics Program at the University of Guelph is based on the Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario’s (OHSCO) Musculoskeletal Disorders Prevention Guideline for Ontario. This initiative is supported by the Ministry of Labour and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board of Ontario.

The University of Guelph offers various programs aimed at recognizing, assessing, and controlling hazards to therefore reduce the risk of injury. Services offered through Occupational Health & Wellness include Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) and ergonomic training, ergonomic assessments and reports, and recommendations during ergonomic purchasing and workspace redesign. These services are described below.

MSD and Ergonomic Training

Because MSDs are strongly linked to risk factors or hazards in the workplace, Occupational Health & Wellness recommends that all University of Guelph employees attend Ergonomics and MSD Prevention training. New employees should be encouraged to attend a session once joining the University of Guelph community.

Training sessions are available to attend throughout the year. Please contact Heather Harris at x52647 to reserve a spot. Customized departmental training sessions are also available. Please contact Occupational Health & Wellness x52647 to discuss your individual group training needs and to book a personalized department training session.

MSD prevention training sessions will provide education regarding the following

- The signs and symptoms of MSD
- How to recognize MSD hazards
- Workplace policies and procedures for dealing with concerns related to MSD
- Information on the equipment, adjustments and procedures workers need to use or follow to reduce or eliminate their exposure to MSD hazards

Ergonomic Assessments and Reports

At the University of Guelph free ergonomic assessments are available to all faculty and staff. Ergonomic assessments may be requested by the supervisor or by the employee. Ergonomic assessments are typically requested for a variety of reasons related to strains, employee discomfort, workstation setup, or for injury prevention needs. If the ergonomic assessment is requested by the employee, the supervisor will be notified of the date of the appointment to confirm the faculty/staff member’s availability. The supervisor may attend during the assessment and concluding recommendation portion of the assessment, however, privacy between Occupational Health & Wellness and the employee will be requested during the confidential medical portion of the assessment (as needed).

New employees are encouraged to contact Occupational Health & Wellness to schedule a preventative ergonomic assessment.

The ergonomic assessment report will be sent to the employee and the supervisor. The recommendations are to reduce the risk factors that could contribute to injury or exacerbation of an existing injury. It is recommended that the report be discussed between the employee and the supervisor to determine potential improvements for implementation. The recommendations included in the report provide the worker with additional techniques and tools that will assist in performing job
duties more comfortably.

Purchasing Ergonomic Equipment or Workspace Redesign

Please contact Occupational Health & Wellness for purchase or office lay out recommendations. Many products may be viewed prior to purchase, in the Ergonomics Learning Centre, in the Alexander Hall Building 31 Room 179. Please contact Heather Sewell x54283 to arrange an appointment to view the ergonomic equipment.

Prior to purchasing ergonomic office seating, ergonomic products or desks, University of Guelph employees are advised to seek advice from Occupational Health and Wellness. Individual ergonomic assessments can be arranged. Approved chairs can be tested and viewed in the Ergonomics Learning Center.

Only chairs meeting the guideline for office ergonomic task chairs and approved by Occupational Health & Wellness, Physical Resources and Purchasing Services, University of Guelph may be purchased.