

Title:

Youth Workers & Ergonomics

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Summary:

Every 12 minutes, British workers between the ages of 16 and 24 suffer work-related injuries that can keep them out of work for up to three days. As young people enter the workforce, it is important that they understand that they are no longer in an environment mostly designed for their protection and safety. Some of the burden of Ergonomics falls into the lap of the workers themselves. This burden is particularly acute with the younger workers. Some would argue that they acc...

Keywords:

Article Body:

Every 12 minutes, British workers between the ages of 16 and 24 suffer work-related injuries that can keep them out of work for up to three days. As young people enter the workforce, it is important that they understand that they are no longer in an environment mostly designed for their protection and safety. Some of the burden of Ergonomics falls into the lap of the workers themselves. This burden is particularly acute with the younger workers. Some would argue that they accidents occur with younger workers as opposed to older workers because they are acting in an immature manner or fooling around on the job. Often, however, these injuries occur because the workers in question lack the experience necessary to protect themselves from commonplace hazards often associated with the workplace.

Anyone new to a job has a higher likelihood of injury, regardless of whether they are considered a "young worker" or are older in age. Younger workers or even workers new to a job need to have the health and safety training that passes for common sense among those who are more used to the job and have been there longer. If young workers understand the risks inherent in their environment they will be more likely to try to protect themselves.

Younger workers are particularly susceptible to musculoskeletal injury because their musculoskeletal system is not yet fully formed and takes the stress in more readily than their older counterparts when they are involved in activities

requiring repetitive movement with awkward limb positioning. In fact, most risks that are present for younger workers but not present for older workers come from the fact that the bodies of the younger employees have not yet developed fully and may not be as strong, limber and resilient as that of the fully mature adults who may serve as their colleagues or even do the same job. Furthermore, protective equipment is often designed for the adult frame and may not fit the younger worker adequately therefore causing more harm than good.

The European Agency for Health and Safety at Work has started a program called "Safe Start", the launch of which will usher in a more dynamic and complete dedication to the safety of young people in the workplace. There will be periods of promotion once a year and the European Agency for Health and Safety at Work has guides and fact-sheets available should workplaces need further information regarding how to keep their young workers out of harm's way.