Ergonomics in the Workplace - The Importance of Workplace Ergonomic Assessments

Companies are required to provide a duty of care to their workers by providing a safe workplace. When it comes to those workers whose job involves desk based tasks such as computer work, reading and writing, it is important to ensure that workers have an understanding of what constitutes good ergonomics and how to reduce the risk of developing musculoskeletal strains and sprains.

Workers who primarily sit and perform desk based tasks are at risk of developing musculoskeletal strains and sprains due to awkward working postures, poorly designed or set up ergonomic work environments, sedentary work behaviours and the need to perform repetitive tasks for long durations.

In recent years there has been an increasing push towards increasing the variety of workers job tasks and postures to avoid sedentary work behaviours. Recent evidence shows that lack of movement and prolonged sitting postures can increase ones risk of developing chronic disease and illness.

Our aim at Corporate Work Health Australia is to not only assess a workers workstation and improve their ergonomics, but also identify when and where other factors such as activity, wellbeing and work tasks may be impacting ones overall work performance and wellbeing.

Our Group Ergonomic Assessment Services

15 Minute ‘Preventative’ Group Ergonomic Assessment

Who Would Benefit from This Assessment?

• Individuals who do not have any specific musculoskeletal injuries.
• Individuals who require an assessment of their workstation as part of the company’s duty of care.
• Individuals who require education on how to adjust their chair and improve their workplace ergonomics i.e. how to set the workstation equipment up to suit their needs and job tasks.
• Companies looking to raise the awareness of good work ergonomics and encourage activity in the workplace.

What Does The 15 Minute Ergonomic Assessment Involve?

• One on one consultation with the worker about their job tasks and any specific concerns with regards to their workstation.
• Physical assessment of the workers desk, chair, monitor, keyboard, mouse and other desk accessories.
• Consultation of the work environment i.e. lighting, temperature, humidity, noise and storage.
• Education and advice on how to adjust their work chair and desk accessories to improve their work ergonomics.
• Education and advice on how to improve their sitting posture and work behaviours to reduce risk of musculoskeletal strains and sprains.
• 1 page report outlining the key assessment findings, advice given, specific equipment requirements or any further changes and recommendations.
30 Minute ‘Minor Complaints’ Group Ergonomic Assessment

Who Would Benefit From This Assessment?

Individuals who are suffering from musculoskeletal complaints such as neck pain, back pain, shoulder pain, elbow pain, wrist and hand pain, overuse injuries such as tendinopathies and repetitive strain injuries.

Individuals who require education on how to improve their seated posture and work behaviours, adjust their chair and improve workplace ergonomics.

The 30 minute consultation is generally encouraged for workers with a specific musculoskeletal complaint and where more time with education and advice is required.

What Does The 30 Minute Ergonomic Assessment Involve?

• One on one consultation with the worker about their job tasks and any specific concerns with regards to their workstation and musculoskeletal aches and pains.
• Physical assessment of the workers desk, chair, monitor, keyboard, mouse and other desk accessories.
• Assessment of the work environment i.e. lighting, temperature, humidity and storage.
• Education and advice on how to adjust their work chair and desk accessories to improve their work ergonomics.
• Education and advice on how to improve their sitting posture and work behaviours to reduce risk of musculoskeletal strains and sprains.
• 2 page report outlining the key assessment findings, advice given and any specific equipment requirements or further changes and recommendations. The 2 page report also includes before and after photos of the workstation to demonstrate changes made.
Our Individual Ergonomic Assessment Services

‘Standard’ One-on-one Ergonomic Assessment

Who Would Benefit From This Assessment?

This ergonomic assessment is designed for an individual worker who may or may not be experiencing pain/discomfort. Our consultants are able to come to you to carry out one-on-one consultations to identify risk factors and assess root cause/s if present and provide recommendations on appropriate management. The assessment allows the health professional to assess the worker at a standard computer based workstation and make suggestions to prevent or minimise risk factors present.

Ergonomic Case Example:

- Suitable for 1 ergonomic assessment/worker
- Nil pain/preventative, or
- 1 pain region/short term complaint/s
- Standard consultation and assessment (30mins) per worker, plus 30 minutes reporting time
- Standard computer based workstation only
- Nil concerns with tasks away from desk area
- No treatment sought from worker for complaint
- Ergonomic assessment includes: Standard report (3-4 pages) provided on assessment documenting tasks completed, worker concerns, current issues and hazards, advice given to worker, changes made to workstation, any ergonomic accessories needed with links to suitable equipment, pre and post assessment photos
‘Specialised’ One-on-one Ergonomic Assessment

Who Would Benefit From This Assessment?

This ergonomic assessment is designed for the injured worker. Many of your workers may complain about pain or numbness after sitting for prolonged periods at the desk. Even more worrying is that some workers often suffer in silence and fail to report the early onset of symptoms. Work performance can decrease as their comfort decreases. Our consultants are able to come to you to carry out one-on-one consultations to identify risk factors and assess root cause/s and provide recommendations on appropriate management. The assessment allows the health professional to interview the worker on their current concerns, any past injury history, and ensure that any modifications suit their individual needs. Our aim is to resolve and/or significantly improve symptoms which workers experience when at work and prevent the likelihood of aggravation occurring.

Ergonomic Case Example:

- Suitable for 1 ergonomic assessment/worker experiencing current musculoskeletal complaints
- Injured worker, or
- Multi region/long term complaint/s
- Longer consultation and assessment (60-75mins) per worker, plus 60-75 minutes reporting time
- Standard computer based workstation or non-standard workstation, eg standing height bench
- +/- concerns with other task/s in the office, eg manual handling, filing etc>
- Worker seeking treatment or referral from GP/Health Professional
- Ergonomic assessment includes: Detailed report (6-8 pages) provided on assessment documenting tasks completed, worker concerns, current issues and hazards, advice given to worker, changes made to workstation, any ergonomic accessories needed with links to suitable equipment, details of current injuries and complaints and aggravating factors, specific advice given by practitioner and any necessary referrals, pre & post ergonomic assessment photos
Our Home Ergonomic Assessment Services

‘Standard’ Home Ergonomic, Health & Safety Assessment (worker has no musculoskeletal complaints)

Who Would Benefit From This Assessment?

• Companies wishing to ensure that their worker’s home ergonomic work environment is safe and ergonomically sound.
• Companies wishing to ensure that their worker’s home environment is safe for work.
• Workers who are required to work from home as part of their working agreement.
• Workers who has no injury/pain/discomfort and perform work tasks at home.

What Does The Home Ergonomic, Health & Safety Assessment Involve?

The Home Ergonomic, Health & Safety Ergonomic assessment is a 30-45 minute consultation with the worker.

The consultation involves:

• Assessment of the workers job tasks and how these tasks are performed.
• Assessment of the workers current working postures and ergonomic work environment (this involves assessment of the desk, chair, computer and other desk accessories).
• Assessment of the work environment i.e. lighting, temperature, humidity and storage/shelving.
• Assessment of the home environment to ensure that it meets home health and safety standards.
• Education and advice on how to adjust their work chair and desk accessories to improve their work ergonomics.
• Education and advice on how to improve their sitting posture and work behaviours to reduce risk of musculoskeletal strains and sprains.
• Referral to medical professionals if required.

Following the Home Ergonomic, Health & Safety assessment, a 5-8 page report is provided.

The detailed report includes the following:

• Observations of the workers posture and how tasks are performed.
• Summary of any concerns with work tasks setup experienced by the worker.
• Advice given and specific recommendations.
• Equipment requirements or further changes/modifications to be made.
• Referrals required
• Ergonomic Assessment incorporating space, lighting, reflections & glare, noise, temperature, humidity, radiation, display screens, keyboard, mouse, other equipment, work surface, chair, other furniture, software design, job design, home health and safety.
‘Specialised’ Home Ergonomic, Health & Safety Assessment (worker is experiencing musculoskeletal complaints)

Who Would Benefit From This Assessment?

- Companies wishing to ensure that their worker’s home ergonomic work environment is safe and ergonomically sound.
- Companies wishing to ensure that their worker’s home environment is safe for work.
- Workers who are required to work from home as part of their working agreement.
- Workers who are suffering from an injury/pain/discomfort and perform work tasks at home.

What Does The Home Ergonomic, Health & Safety Assessment Involve?

The Home Ergonomic, Health & Safety Ergonomic assessment is a 45-60 minute consultation with the worker.

The consultation involves:

- Consultation with the worker about their specific injury, issues with the ergonomic workstation and/or job tasks to identify if there are any environmental, work related or behavioural aggravating or maintaining factors.
- Assessment of the workers job tasks and how these tasks are performed.
- Assessment of the workers current working postures and ergonomic work environment (this involves assessment of the desk, chair, computer and other desk accessories).
- Assessment of the work environment i.e. lighting, temperature, humidity and storage/shelving.
- Assessment of the home environment to ensure that it meets home health and safety standards.
- Education and advice on how to adjust their work chair and desk accessories to improve their work ergonomics.
- Education and advice on how to improve their sitting posture and work behaviours to reduce risk of musculoskeletal strains and sprains.
- Referral to medical professionals if required.

Following the Home Ergonomic, Health & Safety assessment, a 5-8 page report is provided.

The detailed report includes the following:

- Observations of the workers posture and how tasks are performed.
- Summary of the problems experienced by the worker.
- Advice given and specific recommendations.
- Equipment requirements or further changes/modifications to be made.
- Referrals required
- Ergonomic Assessment incorporating space, lighting, reflections & glare, noise, temperature, humidity, radiation, display screens, keyboard, mouse, other equipment, work surface, chair, other furniture, software design, job design, home health and safety.
- Pre & Post ergonomic assessment photos.
- Summary findings of both the home work area and home safety.
Our Vehicle Ergonomic Assessment Services

Vehicle Ergonomic Assessment

20 Minute ‘Standard’ Vehicle Postural Assessment & Report

Who Would Benefit From This Assessment?

- Workers who are required to drive for their employer.
- Companies who are looking to raise the awareness and education for drivers to improve their seated work posture and educate them on how to set the vehicle up to suit their specific needs.

What Does The Vehicle Ergonomic Assessment Involve?

The 20 minute vehicle postural assessment report includes:

- Consultation with the worker regarding any specific issues they have with the vehicle.
- Assessment of the workers current vehicle set up.
- Education and advice on how to adjust the vehicle to suit their needs.
- Reporting on assessment findings, advice and education given.

‘Specialised’ Vehicle Assessment & Report

Who Would Benefit From This Assessment?

- Workers who are required to drive for their employer.
- Workers with specific musculoskeletal complaints.
- Workers who also perform work within the vehicle or manual handling tasks to/from the vehicle.
- Companies who are looking to raise the awareness and education for drivers to improve their seated work posture and educate them on how to set the vehicle up to suit their specific needs.

What Does The Detailed Vehicle Ergonomic Assessment Involve?

The detailed vehicle postural assessment report includes:

- Consultation with the worker regarding any specific issues they have with the vehicle.
- Assessment of the workers current vehicle set up.
- Assessment of work tasks performed in the vehicle and/or manual handling from the vehicle.
- Education and advice on how to adjust the vehicle to suit their needs.
- Reporting on assessment findings, advice and education given.
Our Office Risk Assessment Services

Whole Office Risk Assessment

Conducting an office risk assessment allows us to identify where there may be risks in the office environment and provide you with solutions to reduce the risk in the office work environment. As part of the office risk assessment, consultation with key stakeholders such as HR, MD or Operations manager, OHS rep and office workers is required.

These risk assessments allow us to begin or continue the consultation process required under Australian legislation between the company and its workers, and also begin or improve the process of implementing safety policies and procedures throughout the office work environment. They are perfectly suited to allow us to report on the areas that need to be further assessed and those that are highlighted as high risk.

The duration of the office risk assessment will vary depending on each company and may take between 2 hours and half a day onsite, and this time again in reporting time. Our consultants will provide you with a detailed report on the office risk assessment and provide you with solutions to help reduce any risks found throughout the assessment.

The office Risk Assessment involves the assessment of the following key areas:

- Office layout
- Workstations
- Job Design
- Workload and tasks
- Lighting
- Manual handling
- Noise
- Storage, housekeeping, cleanliness and cleaning methods
- Floors & stairs
- Computers, copying and other equipment
- Hazardous substances
- Personal protective equipment

The report includes:

- Assessment findings.
- Reporting on hazards and risks that need addressing or improvement.
Ergonomic Training Courses for the Company
(Train the assessor in Ergonomics)

Corporate Work Health Australia have identified that companies need to up skill workers so that they can ease the burden of using external consultants for ergonomic workstation training and risk assessments. We have therefore developed a series of workshops focused towards educating key workers on how to set up other workers at their workstation and perform simple desk assessments.

Level 1 - Educating Workers on How to Set a Worker up at their Workstation (2 hours)

This practical based seminar has been designed to provide a group of workers with a better understanding of how to set up an ergonomic workstation, allowing them to assist in setting up a workstation for a new worker, or a worker who has relocated within the office. Suitable for those companies wishing to provide refresher training on how to set up a workstation and for those companies where workers are at high risk of developing musculoskeletal complaints due to spending long periods of time at their desk.

Who Would Benefit From This Training Session?

- Companies who wish to train key workers (HR, OHS, People & Culture, Team Leaders) in being able to set other workers up at their workstation.
- This is the ideal workshop for companies needing to set up new workers, workers returning from maternity leave and workers who have changed desks.
- Companies who would like to promote a more active workplace and educate their workers on how to improve their sitting and working postures and ergonomics.

Subjects covered include:

- **Ergonomic Chairs** - the ins and outs for the variety of workers in your workplace
- **Setting up the chair for a worker in relation to the desk available**
- **Footrests - when and how**
- **Keyboard and mouse setup**
- **Monitor setup - single or multiple**
- **Phone and document setup**
- **When to refer for an external assessment**
Level 2 - Setting up a Worker at Their Workstation & Performing Simple Ergonomic Desk Assessments (3.5 hours)

This training session builds on the Level 1 session and allows workers to begin to complete basic ergonomic risk assessments for other workers in the office, including initial desk setups and for those workers who are tall, short or have specific needs. This course is suitable for those companies who would like to have internal workers upskilled to conduct basic ergonomic risk assessments.

Who Would Benefit From This Training Session?

- Companies who wish to train key workers (HR, OHS, People & Culture, Team Leaders) in being able to set other workers up at their workstation as well as conduct basic ergonomic risk assessments.
- This is the ideal workshop for companies needing to set up new workers, workers returning from maternity leave, workers who have changed desks and workers who are tall, short or have specific needs.
- Companies who would like basic ergonomic reports outlining the assessment findings and ergonomic workstation changes for OHS/WHS records.

Subjects covered include:

- A basic introduction to ergonomics
- A basic introduction to relevant OHS/WHS legislation and risk management
- Completing a basic task analysis to understand how the worker interacts with their work area
- A step by step guide to setting up a workstation
- Ergonomic Chairs – how to ‘drive’ the chairs available and how to setup the chair for a worker in relation to their desk and workspace
- Replacing a chair with more suitable chair when the current chair is not suitable for an individual worker
- Adjusting desk height if assessed as beneficial
- Relocating a worker on their desk or within their work area if assessed as beneficial
- Setting up the keyboard, mouse, monitors, phone and documents in relation to the worker's tasks
- Basic environmental concerns at a workstation
- Adjusting a workstation for the taller and shorter worker
- How to complete a basic risk assessment template for OHS/WHS records
- When to refer for an external assessment
Level 3 - Workplace Desk Assessments in Detail (7 hours)

This training session builds on the Level 2 session and allows workers to begin to complete basic ergonomic risk assessments for workers with minor musculoskeletal complaints within the office. This course is suitable for those companies who would like to have internal workers upskilled to conduct basic ergonomic risk assessments for simple complaints prior to conducting an external ergonomic assessment.

Who Would Benefit From This Training Session?

- Companies who wish to train key workers (HR, OHS, People & Culture, Team Leaders) in being able to conduct basic ergonomic risk assessments for these workers who might be experiencing low level back pain or neck pain.
- This is the ideal workshop for companies needing to set up new workers, workers returning from maternity leave, workers who have changed desks and workers who are tall, short or have minor aches and pains.
- Companies who would like basic ergonomic reports outlining the assessment findings and ergonomic workstation changes for OHS/WHS records.

Subjects covered include all the subjects covered in the level 2 session, plus:

- All subjects covered in our Level 2 training session
- The causes of common complaints experienced at a workstation
- How to begin adjusting a workstation for common complaints reported at a workstation
- The variety of alternative ergonomic accessories which may be sourced to help an individual worker
- An introduction to standing desks – Are they beneficial? When and how to introduce them for the right worker
- How to complete a basic risk assessment template for OHS/WHS records for a worker with minor complaints
- Clear guidelines when to refer this worker for an external assessment or medical treatment

Inclusions on both Level 2 and Level 3 courses:

We will provide all attendees with the following hardcopy handouts:

- Certificate of attendance/completion
- Powerpoint presentation handout
- Ergonomic training manual resource
- Ergonomic risk assessment template (office based)

We will also provide the company with the following PDF documents to use as part of their OHS management for office based computer tasks:

- Office based ergonomic risk assessment template
- Office based ergonomic self-assessment template
- Home office based ergonomic self-assessment template

Should your company currently have ergonomic assessment templates already in use, please let us know as we will be happy to adapt training to include these risk assessment forms within the training so that they can be used by key stakeholders to undertake risk assessments in the workplace.
Ergonomic Workshops for the Worker

Corporate Work Health Australia have developed workshops focused on educating workers about posture, work behaviours and ergonomics. Please see below for a detailed description of each of these workshops.

Sit-Safe Ergonomic Seminar

Who Would Benefit from This Seminar?

- Workers who are required to perform desk based work tasks in an office environment or home work environment.
- Workers who are required to “hot desk” in the work environment.
- Companies who would like to promote a more active workplace and educate their workers on how to improve their sitting and working postures and ergonomics.
- Companies who have identified that there are current ergonomic issues or a number of workers who are suffering from musculoskeletal strains and sprains in the workplace.

What Does This Seminar Involve?

The Sit - Safe Seminar is typically a 45 minute presentation (this time can be tailored to suit your needs from 30-60 minutes).

The seminar covers the following areas:

- How to improve your seated work posture.
- The importance of keeping active in the workplace and simple strategies to implement this.
- How to avoid musculoskeletal strains and sprains by varying your work tasks and improving your workplace ergonomics.
- How to adjust the chair and workplace ergonomic equipment to suit your needs.
- Common injuries that occur with desk based computer jobs and how to avoid these.
- Basic review of the anatomy of the body and why/how injuries occur.
- Simple stretches and mobility exercises to help reduce musculoskeletal strains and sprains.

Additional Assessment Service

After the seminar we can also arrange to spend 5-10 minutes with each worker to review their workplace, make changes to their current work environment and answer any specific questions they might have in relation to their injuries and or work environment.

No detailed reporting is included in this additional service. We will provide a list of specific equipment requirements that workers may benefit from.
Vehicle Ergonomic Training Seminar

Who Would Benefit from This Seminar?

• Workers who are required to drive a vehicle as part of their job role.

• Workers who would benefit from further advice and education on how to improve their current driving postures and ergonomics.

• Companies who have identified that their workers are currently suffering from musculoskeletal strains and sprains and would like to increase their workers understanding of sedentary postures, poor ergonomics and how to prevent musculoskeletal strains and sprains.

• Companies and workers who would like to educate their workers on how to improve their working posture within the vehicle and/or manual handling of objects in and out of the vehicle.

What Is Involved in This Seminar?

The vehicle ergonomic training seminar is a 45 minute seminar (this can be adapted to suit your needs and range from 30-60 minutes)

The seminar includes:

• Educating workers on the importance of good seated posture and how to adjust the seat to suit their needs.

• Educating workers on how to improve vehicle ergonomics i.e. mirrors, steering wheel height etc to improve their ergonomics.

• Educating workers on the importance of being active in their job and how to prevent musculoskeletal strains and sprains from prolonged sitting postures.

• Simple stretches and mobility exercises to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal strains and sprains.

• Educating workers who are required to perform work within their car i.e. mobile phone, laptop work and how to prevent musculoskeletal injuries.

• Educating workers how to reduce the risk of manual handling injuries in and out of the vehicle.

• A review of the common injuries associated with sitting postures and a review of the basic anatomy associated with this.

• A step by step guide to setting up your vehicle correctly.

Additional Assessment Service

After the seminar we can arrange to spend 10 minutes reviewing each workers current vehicle set up and answering any specific questions they might have in relation to injuries and their vehicle set up.

There is no specific reporting included in with this service.
Vehicle Ergonomics & Manual Handling Workshop (45 mins)

This is an interactive lecture that we will deliver onsite at your workplace that focuses on the education and prevention of musculoskeletal injuries related to vehicle seat set up and manual handling into and out of the vehicle.

Who Would Benefit From This Seminar?

• Workers who are required to drive as part of their job.
• Workers who perform work tasks within their vehicle.
• Workers who manual handle objects to and from their vehicle.

Subjects covered include:

• Work-related musculoskeletal complaints and their causes associated with driving.
• Poor driving postures and habits.
• Recommended postures to minimise your risk of developing musculoskeletal aches and pains.
• Tips to setting up your vehicle correctly.
• Tips to improve manual handling objects in/out of the vehicle.
• Exercises and stretches to relieve tension.

Combined Sit Safe & Manual Handling Workshop (2 hours)

This is an interactive and practical workshop focused on educating workers on how to prevent musculoskeletal injuries as a result of working at a desk and performing manual handling tasks.

Who Would Benefit From This Seminar?

Workers who carry out both a high volume of sitting and manual handling tasks occasionally i.e. office worker.

Subjects covered include:

• Back to basics: the cause of back pain in society today
• Basic review of anatomy of the body and why/how injuries occur, including common injury sites, causes and symptoms
• How to improve your seated posture
• How to avoid strains and sprains by varying your work tasks, and improving your workplace ergonomics and manual handling techniques
• How to adjust the chair and workplace ergonomic equipment, desk, keyboard, monitor, mouse, telephones
• The importance of keeping active in the workplace and simple strategies to implement this
• How to identify hazardous manual tasks and reduce the associated risk
• Tips and techniques for lifting, carrying pushing and pulling
• Simple stretches and mobility exercises to help reduce strains and sprain
Postural Screening & Musculoskeletal Consultations

Who Would Benefit From This?

- Companies who have identified that their workforce would benefit from further education on sitting postures and general ergonomics in the workplace.
- Companies who would like to offer their workers the opportunity to undergo a general musculoskeletal consultation where questions about general musculoskeletal aches and pains can be asked.
- Companies looking to raise the awareness and educate workers on the importance of being active in the workplace.

What Does This Involve?

We can arrange for 10-20 minute consultations with workers that involve one of our Osteopaths or Physiotherapists to provide the following:

- Basic postural screening.
- Educate the worker on seated posture and how to improve this.
- Educate the worker on how to improve their workstation ergonomics.
- Answer questions with regards to workers specific musculoskeletal aches and pains.
- Offer stretching and mobility exercises to the worker.
- No specific reporting is included in this consultation.

For All Services

For all our services other than our one-on-one assessments Corporate Work Health Australia consult for 2 hours, half day (3.5 hours) or full day (7 hours) with our clients. The specialist assessments can be completed as a stand-alone service. In this time we aim to design and complete strategies to best meet our client's needs. This may be combining services you see on our website or completely designing something new. Customised solutions provide far better outcomes and return on investment for our clients than off the shelf products.

All of our trainers and/or assessors are registered Osteopaths, Physiotherapists, Exercise Physiologists or Occupational Therapists who work in clinical practice, and therefore have a very good understanding about strains and sprains from working at a desk. A lot of educational advice is often given to the worker to help with prevention as well as correction of any current set up issues.