

What's new on the horizon

Canada's leader in occupational health

HOW ERGONOMICS CAN HELP REDUCE PAIN

BY ANDREW HARRINGTON, KINESIOLOGIST, HORIZON ST. JOHN'S

**WHY YOU SHOULD INCLUDE
PRE-SHIFT STRETCHING
IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE**

+ 8 STRETCHES TO TRY OUT

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Clinician Spotlight:

Asif Latif, Vice-President,
Operations, Canadian
Paramedical Services

In the News:

Industry Updates



HOW ERGONOMICS CAN HELP REDUCE PAIN

By Andrew Harrington, Kinesiologist, Horizon St. John's

In any line of work, one of the largest priorities for employers is the health, safety and wellness of their employees. Some of the onus is on the employee for this, but creating a work environment that promotes health has a profound impact on productivity, employee morale and workplace absenteeism. To create this type of work environment, the importance of ergonomics has to be understood with regards to how it prevents both acute and chronic injuries by reducing pain and putting the employee in a position in which they can safely execute all the demands of their occupation.

WHAT IS ERGONOMICS?

Ergonomics refers to refining movements or designing products for optimal human use. Many injuries that occur in the workplace can be prevented through proper ergonomics. This is how ergonomics can directly contribute to reduced workplace absenteeism. By placing a priority on preventing injury rather than curing an injury, the employer will create a healthier work environment and in turn reduce overall healthcare costs.

It is well documented that a plethora of health issues, specifically musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), can arise from sitting at a workstation incorrectly for a prolonged period of time. These issues can be avoided with a properly designed and ergonomically sound workstation design which will place the employee in a proper working posture. Ergonomics are not limited to workstation jobs however, as proper ergonomic principles can also be applied to a large number of occupations that are in the field. Workers in more physically demanding occupations face a variety of challenges in the field that include but are not limited to working in awkward positions, bending, twisting, reaching away from the body or overhead, repetitive movements and lifting heavy objects, materials and equipment. Proper ergonomics is an essential aspect of avoiding workplace injury no matter the location or occupation.

Proper ergonomics is an essential aspect of avoiding workplace injury no matter the location or occupation.

PREVENTING INJURY

Injury can either be acute or chronic in nature. Acute injury refers to a specific impact or traumatic event that is specific to an area of the body. A chronic injury is one that occurs over time through overuse. Chronic injuries manifest initially with mild symptoms that are often ignored and thus gradually progress to a point in which the pain is not manageable any longer.

Both types of injury are very common in the workplace, however both can be avoided with a thorough and effective [job demand analysis](#). A job demand analysis allows a kinesiologist to properly identify all the possible hazards, working postures and requirements of a specific job. The kinesiologist again visits the physical location of the job and is able to observe, measure and interview the employees. This puts a focus on preventive health but also allows the kinesiologist to develop a fit for work assessment and a return to work assessment. A job demand analysis also provides the employer with a realistic view of the demand of a job with the specific worker's ability.

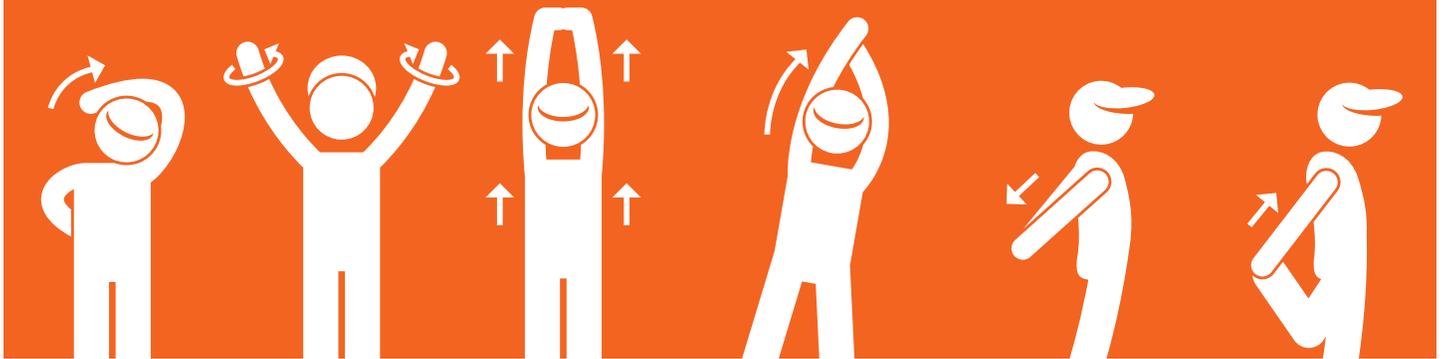
Ergonomics has a profound and positive impact on reducing pain in the workplace and focusing on preventive health issues. Proper ergonomic assessments and job demand analysis place the employees in the safest and most effective way possible to do their specific job. The kinesiologist can observe, measure and formulate a specific plan uniquely designed for the individual. The proper use and implementation of ergonomics in the workplace certainly leads to a decrease in absenteeism and in healthcare costs, and promotes a safe and healthy working environment for all involved.

30 DAY WATER CHALLENGE

REGISTER TODAY!

horizon
Occupational Health Solutions

WHY YOU SHOULD INCLUDE PRE-SHIFT STRETCHING IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE



Regular stretching is as important as regular exercise and should be part of everyone's daily routine to help maintain mobility and function, especially those in physically demanding jobs. A group stretching routine implemented in the workplace can have great benefits for the employees and can be a great way to start the workday. These are important considerations when trying to prevent musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

WHAT ARE MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS?

MSDs are injuries and disorders that affect the musculoskeletal system, including muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, and nerves. MSDs can include repetitive strain injury, cumulative trauma disorder, overuse injury, musculoskeletal injury, and sprains or strains. Many body parts can be affected by MSDs. The back is the most common, but the shoulders, neck, elbows, hands and wrists are also frequently involved.

Common symptoms of MSDs include pain, swelling and tenderness, reduced range of motion, stiffness, and tingling and/or numbness.

WHY WORRY ABOUT WORK-RELATED INJURIES?

Many employees are exposed to risk factors and hazards on the job that may increase their risk of sustaining a work-related

injury, specifically a musculoskeletal disorder. In fact, MSDs are the most common type of workplace injury in Canada. MSDs can affect all aspects of a worker's life (pain and suffering, lost wages, long-term disability, family burden, inability to participate in leisure activities, etc.) and they are costly for workplaces (compensation costs, lost productivity, etc.).

Employers and employees alike should be concerned and engaged in minimizing workplace injuries. A stretching program is an excellent addition to a comprehensive wellness and injury prevention program to achieve this. At Horizon OHS we can create a stretching/warm-up program specific to your organization's job demands.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

These benefits can be realized by incorporating an effective daily stretching routine that only takes 5-10 minutes to complete before beginning the workday!

BENEFITS OF A PRE-WORK STRETCHING ROUTINE:

- **Improves flexibility** – lengthening the muscles will increase range of motion and mobility of the joints
- **Improves energy level** – a few minutes of stretching will ‘wake up’ the body and mind
- **Improves blood circulation** – increasing oxygen and nutrients to the muscles and joints
- **Decreases pain** – increasing mobility will help to decrease stiffness and pain
- **Improves posture** – lengthening tight muscles that pull body structures out of normal alignment (for example, shoulders rolled forward due to tight chest muscles) will improve posture
- **Reduces stress** – calming the mind and providing a mental break
- **Decreases risk of injury** – warming up the muscles to prepare for the work to be performed throughout the day, as well as being mindful of, and bringing awareness to workplace safety
- **Improves workplace morale and employee bonding** – participating in a stretching routine as a group is a great team building activity and can help employees to motivate each other.

PRE-SHIFT STRETCHING

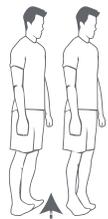
Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) account for more than 30% of all nonfatal occupational injury and illness cases each year but with proper pre-shift warm-up, those high rates of injury can be reduced.

In many physically strenuous or demanding workplaces, it’s in the best interest of both the employer and the employee to create pre-shift warm-up programs. However, to fully understand the types of stretches that are necessary for given job position, it’s recommended that the employer work with an Occupational Health provider to complete a [job demand analysis](#).

For more information on how we can help your workplace reduce absenteeism rates, [contact us](#) today.

TRY THESE SIMPLE STRETCHES BEFORE YOUR NEXT SHIFT TO LOWER YOUR RISK OF MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES

Calf Raises



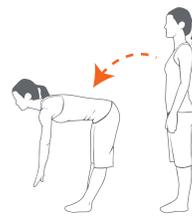
Place feet hip width apart. Raise both heels off the ground until you are standing tall on the balls of your feet. Do 12-15 repetitions.

High Knees



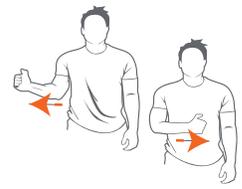
While standing, alternate between raising your right knee to your left elbow and left knee to right elbow. Complete 10-12 reps per side.

Hip Hinges



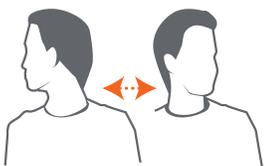
Place feet hip width apart. Place hands on upper thighs. Keeping your back straight, shift your hips back, slide your hands down past your knees and then up again. Repeat 12-15 times.

Internal/External Shoulder Rotation



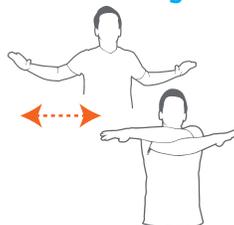
Pin elbows into your sides. With elbows at 90 degrees alternate rotating your arms internally and externally. Do 12-15 repetitions.

Head Turns



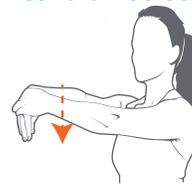
Turn head to the left then all the way to the right. Do not over stretch. Repeat 12-15 times per side.

Arm Swings



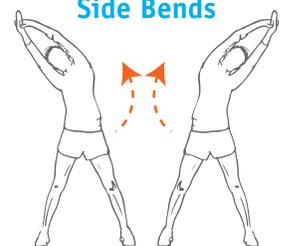
Hold arms out laterally, at shoulder height, and with elbows at 90 degrees. Swing your arms across your chest then back. Squeeze your shoulder blades together with every back swing. Alternate arm over arm for 20 repetitions.

Wrist Flexion/Extension Stretch



Hold arms out in front of you. With help from your non stretched hand, flex your wrist down towards the floor. Hold stretch for 5 seconds. Then, with help from your non stretched hand, extend wrist up towards the ceiling. Hold stretch for 5 seconds. Repeat 2 times for both arms.

Side Bends



Hold your arms fully extended over your head while keeping your hands together. With your feet shoulder width apart, lean to the right as far as you can then repeat on the left. Do 12-15 repetitions.

¹ Source: www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics



Clinician Spotlight

Meet

ASIF LATIF

Vice-President, Operations,
Canadian Paramedical Services



Asif Latif joined Horizon through the 2015 acquisition of Canadian Paramedical Services. Graduating as a physician in Belarus, he has worked in emergency medicine since 2001. When he moved to Canada in 2006, he shifted his focus to paramedicine. Since then, he has become a recognized expert in [onsite medical services](#), working with many large oil and gas, mining, and energy companies.

WHAT DO YOU DO AT MEDISYS HEALTH GROUP?

I began working for Canadian Paramedical Services in November 2009. Initially I worked as the Operations Manager. Two years later, I was promoted to General Manager, and three years after that I was appointed Vice-President of Operations.

My role involves supporting the people around me, ensuring day-to-day operations run smoothly, and maintaining client relations. I strongly believe in setting up a work environment that supports and encourages growth and change.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN ONSITE MEDICAL SERVICES?

I first became fascinated and intrigued by emergency medical services during my time as a doctor in the Ambulance Service in Brest, Belarus. I enjoyed the fast-paced environment, and the fact that I was making a difference and helping others in their time of need.

Onsite medical services with Canadian Paramedical Services are just another form of this. Rather than going door-to-door, we work closely with a field crew. Building trust with these workers and ensuring they are in good hands from a medical standpoint is very fulfilling.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES IN DELIVERING MEDICAL SERVICES IN REMOTE AREAS?

Most oil and gas industry sites are far from populated areas. Some of our current sites are many hours away from the nearest hospital, and others are only accessible by air. Supporting these sites generates a wide variety of challenges, because every client and location brings its own unique issues to the table.

Assessing needs, implementing plans, and efficiently executing them is difficult but rewarding. Obviously, we never want a client to require our services in the field – but when they do, we want them to know they are in capable hands.

WHAT IMPACT DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE MAKING IN THE INDUSTRY?

In my current position, I've been able to make changes to our medical approach to the oil and gas industry. I've raised the level of care across the entire industry; I've also introduced Physician Assistants (PAs) which has helped lower the cost of improving all of my clients' medical programs. This initiative allowed sites to enhance their medical coverage while offering a better working environment.

TELL US ABOUT A PAST EXPERIENCE WHERE YOU FELT YOU MADE A SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE DIFFERENCE.

We had a case in the field where one of my PAs made a very rare diagnosis on a patient (approximately 1 case per 100,000). After seeing the patient, the PA promptly sent him for further medical attention. For this particular disease, the mortality

rate for untreated cases is around 95%; however, if patients are diagnosed and treated early, their prognosis for survival is about 80-90%.

In this case, I truly believe the PA saved the patient's life. This is not something that a standard Paramedic or Advanced Care Paramedical would have caught. It was the PA's background and in-depth knowledge that allowed this to happen. In that moment, I knew I had made a difference, and the service I was providing to clients truly had a lasting impact.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF HEALTH ADVICE YOU GIVE YOUR PATIENTS?

Your body gives you indications when something is wrong; this is the time to visit your doctor or seek professional medical help. It's always concerning when people try to diagnose themselves online because they typically find inappropriate medical information, which can lead to complications later on.

I strongly recommend against people going online to self-diagnose. Instead, they should seek professional medical advice through applications like Medisys On-Demand. Medisys On-Demand is a virtual healthcare platform that provides 24/7, personalized medical support by secure text and video chat. By offering unlimited virtual consults with bilingual Canadian healthcare professionals, it is the best solution for any non-emergency physical and mental health concerns.



Your year-round,
on-demand employee
healthcare solution

LEARN MORE



medisys
on-demand

In The News

INDUSTRY UPDATE



WHAT'S TRENDING IN THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH INDUSTRY?



1. Protect against respiratory hazards with knowledge

OHS Canada Magazine asked Horizon's National Medical Director, Dr. Ken Jenkins, to weigh in on the different respiratory hazards in safety sensitive environments and actions that should be taken to protect yourself. To read more, [click here](#).

2. Silicosis and the importance of medical audits

Canadian Mining Magazine asked Horizon's Lead Researcher, Dr. Farrell Cahill, to weigh in on silicosis – an irreversible work-related lung disease – and the importance of workplace medical audits to prevent and identify cases of it. To read more, [click here](#).

3. CSA standard for cannabis impairment coming next year

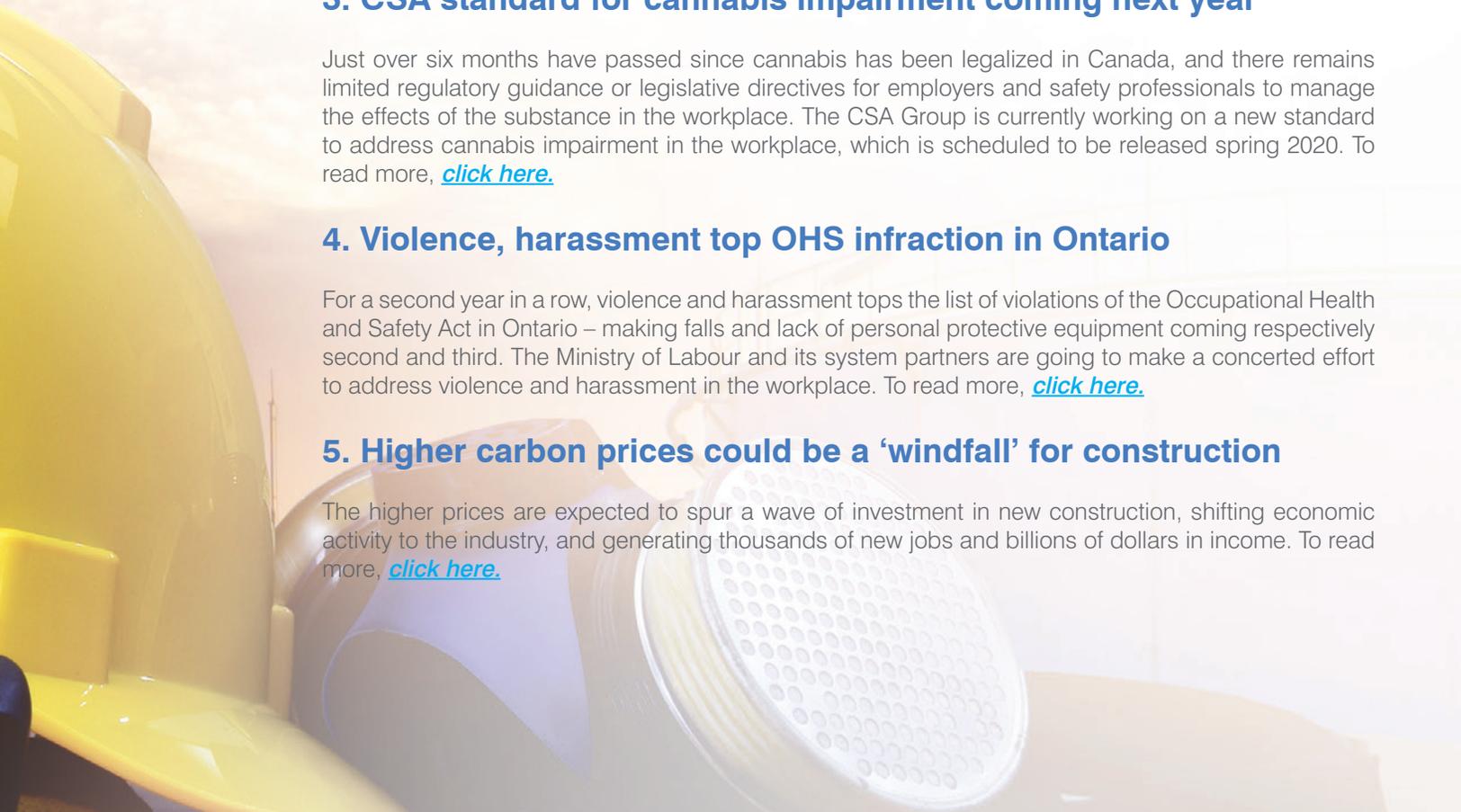
Just over six months have passed since cannabis has been legalized in Canada, and there remains limited regulatory guidance or legislative directives for employers and safety professionals to manage the effects of the substance in the workplace. The CSA Group is currently working on a new standard to address cannabis impairment in the workplace, which is scheduled to be released spring 2020. To read more, [click here](#).

4. Violence, harassment top OHS infraction in Ontario

For a second year in a row, violence and harassment tops the list of violations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act in Ontario – making falls and lack of personal protective equipment coming respectively second and third. The Ministry of Labour and its system partners are going to make a concerted effort to address violence and harassment in the workplace. To read more, [click here](#).

5. Higher carbon prices could be a 'windfall' for construction

The higher prices are expected to spur a wave of investment in new construction, shifting economic activity to the industry, and generating thousands of new jobs and billions of dollars in income. To read more, [click here](#).





ERGONOMIC SERVICES

MINIMIZE THE RISK OF INJURY AND MAXIMIZE PRODUCTIVITY

Horizon ergonomic solutions deliver the services and resources required to safeguard all types of workers from injury – whether it’s through assessments, training, education seminars or job demand analysis.

CONTACT US

to learn more about our ergonomic solutions.

PROTECT YOUR PEOPLE. MANAGE YOUR RISK.



horizon
Occupational Health Solutions

member of the Medisys Health Group
medisys
health group

Canada's leader in occupational health