

The Aging Worker

Getting the most out of your most valuable
employees

The percentage of older workers is growing dramatically

Companies who want to compete are going to figure out ways to accommodate this aging workforce.

There is a lag time between the changes taking place in our bodies..

and the brain's ability to adapt to these changes!

A problem occurs when the body
changes...

but the job demands and work
practices remain the same!

Areas impacted by the aging process

- Strength
- Flexibility
- Endurance
- Vision
- Hearing

Changes in the spine

- Arthritis
- Degenerative Disc Disease
- Decreased Strength
- Decreased Flexibility
- Increased Recovery Time

Additional things that are impacted by the aging process

- Experience
- Knowledge
- Reliability
- Work Ethic

The trick is to minimize the impact
of the physical changes

And maximize the positive things
that come with an aging workforce

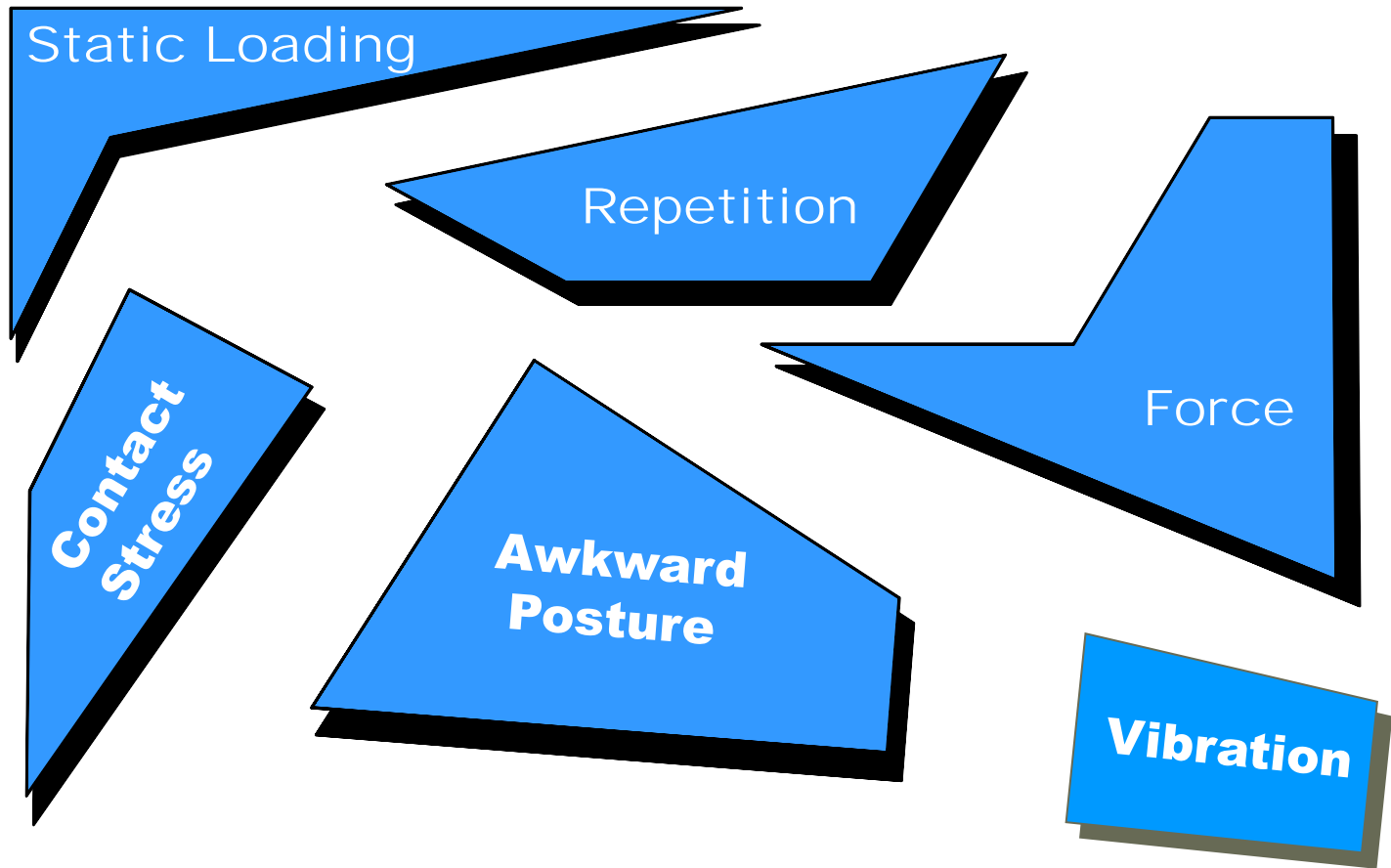
Reducing Strains/Sprains and Accidents

- Effective Use of Tools and Equipment/Ergonomics
- Policies and Procedures
- Training
- Reinforcement and Enforcement
- Stretching/Warm-up

Tools and Equipment

Making a job less demanding for your aging workforce makes it less demanding for everyone.

Ergonomic Risk Factors



Risk of injury increases with:

- Prolonged exposure to any of these ergonomic risk factors
- Presence of multiple risk factors within a single job task

How much of the work being performed is related to the successful completion of the job?



Look for changes that cost the least and have the greatest impact.



Ergonomic Tips to Minimize Force

- Use the correct tools / powered tools for the task
 - Powered tools tend to require less exertion to perform a task
 - Ensure that the weight of a powered tool (and cording) does not create additional force issues
- Use only the amount of force necessary to complete the task



Improve Lighting



Decrease Complexity



Policies and Procedures

A load that could be handled by 1 person when they were 25 may now need to be handled by 2 people when they are 50.

Simply asking employees to work within their physical limits **DOES NOT WORK.**

Ergonomic Tips to Minimize Force

A Two-Person Lift Is Appropriate When. . .

- ❑ A lift, hoist or other mechanical assistance is unavailable
- ❑ The object is heavier than you are capable of lifting alone (typically more than 35 pounds)
- ❑ The object is not heavier than what two people are capable of lifting (typically less than 60 pounds)
- ❑ The object is awkward or oversized.
- ❑ Any object that does not have its weight equally distributed within the load.
- ❑ **Remember some objects are too heavy or awkward to be handled with two people**



Training

What do employees need to know in order to work safely....and how do you turn “what they know” into “what they do”?

Training

- Orientation
- Education
- Training

The choices employees make either increase or decrease the demands

More often than not habits and peer pressure will override “logic”

The Power Position

BETTER Lifting

Keep it Close and Keep the Curves

Build a Bridge

Feet First

Following a training session:

- What did you hear that made sense?
- Of what made sense, what would you like to hear again in the workplace?
- Of what you'd like to hear again, what is the best way to provide it (method/frequency)?
- What do you need in your environment to help you in this effort?

Stretching/Warm-up

This is one of the few injury prevention tools available to every single one of your employees regardless of the job they are doing

Why employees should stretch and warm-up

- Warm-up muscle tissue
- Increase oxygen flow to muscle
- Increase range-of-motion
- Increase flexibility
- Decrease Range of Motion

Why Employees Resist

- Embarrassing
- Peer Pressure
- Previous Injuries
- Time Constraints
- Lack of management/supervisor commitment

Principles of Stretching

- Let your body know what's coming
- Let your body breathe
- Remember the rule of opposites

Blink!

Reinforcement /Enforcement

Are safe behaviors mandatory or “optional with consequences”?

Mentorships

Find ways to capture (and recognize) the expertise and experience of your aging workforce.

Aging is a gift.....

Only the lucky ones live long
enough to achieve it!