

Job Ready Services



February 2011

It's Not Work THERAPY, It's Work CONDITIONING!

Physical therapy is often prescribed 2-3 days per week, but this is not conducive to conditioning someone to return to work. That is why **work conditioning should be a daily program.**

Work conditioning and work hardening are NOT the same thing! Work conditioning is a structured program of physical conditioning, ergonomics training, and education in safe work practices to address the individualized needs of the injured worker as it relates to their return to a specific job or job type. Work hardening programs include Psychologist, Vocational Counseling and Physician intervention with the addition of work conditioning to address physical work deficits.

Programs typically run 2-4 weeks with re-evaluations of the worker's progress every 2 weeks to identify objective improvements, effort levels and progress towards attaining goal of return to work. If the worker has not been doing much at home in the way of exercises or has not been doing light duty work, the first 3 days may prove to be difficult. Increased soreness and pain will likely occur, but this is normal and the best way to alleviate that pain is to **continue the work conditioning instead of staying home being inactive**, which contributes to the cycle of pain.

But isn't a daily program expensive??

Some recent data from OSHA cited in Professional Safety Magazine indicates musculoskeletal disorders "continue for the 2nd year in a row to comprise almost 30% of all workplace injuries and

illnesses requiring time away from work." The OSHA website also indicates the



indirect costs of any injury can be as much as 4.5 times higher than the direct costs. For example, a claim costing \$42,000 (the average worker's comp claim cost in NC) can end up costing \$189,000 with all of the indirect costs (which the employer ALWAYS pays). If a work conditioning program can assist an injured worker to return to work **even one day earlier than expected – the program pays for itself (and more!)**

One of the most controversial aspects of return to work for injured workers is **sustainability**. The big question, after physical capabilities are determined, is **"Can the injured worker work an eight-hour (or twelve hour) work day within job demands?"** If they are only attending 2-3 times per week, can this question be reasonably and objectively answered unless their job was part time at injury?

A **progressive daily program** offers the opportunity to determine the injured workers daily work tolerance. Once the worker meets his return to work demands and demonstrates the ability to perform at a greater demand level indicating a strength reserve to perform repetitive work, return to work should be recommended. A gradual return to work should be considered with an opportunity to transition worker back into the work place as

research indicates improved outcomes when the worker is present in the workplace. Alternatively, if no progression is made, then discharge should be recommended and worker should possibly be referred for FCE to address objective work abilities.

Waiting for an injured worker to be 100% to return to work is futile as the worker cannot be deemed 100% until they have successfully returned to work. We have found that a worker who is able to complete a 4hr/day aggressive work conditioning program demonstrating work tolerance within their job demands with a level of reserve is safe to return to the workplace.

For more information about work conditioning, Functional Capacity Evaluations, Fit for Duty testing, Employment testing, Job Analyses and Ergonomic Assessments, contact Job Ready Services: www.jobreadyservices.net or call: 919-256-1400.

New Staff at Job Ready!

Please welcome Mark Dufault, our newest staff member! Mark is a Physical Therapist with over 15 years of experience in the field of PT.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS:

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2011

12:00pm-1:00pm

North Carolina: A State Under Siege

Learn about how poor management, unions and Washington DC impose threats on NC employers and what employers can do to avoid them.

Speaker: Gary Roscoe, Acclaim HR Consulting

Location: Job Ready office in Raleigh

For more information or to register for any Job Ready events, go to our website:

www.jobreadyservices.net and click on the "Education" tab.



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2011

12:00pm-1:00pm

Motion Loss: Clinical Outcomes and Financial Burden

Learn about the compounding issues faced by orthopedic patients struggling with severe motion loss, both clinically and financially. Learn about the etiology and terminology of how and why motion loss occurs. Learn about the treatment options for these patients- surgery, physical therapy and mechanical therapy. Clinical and financial outcomes associated with the treatment options will be summarized.

Lucas Dinga

Job Ready office in Raleigh

Approved: CCM, CRC (1 hr)

Register/RSVP by February 22

www.jobreadyservices.net and click on

"Education" tab

Or, contact Michelle Morgan:

michelle.morgan@jobreadyservices.net

