



# Job Ready Services

July 2012 Issue

## Strength Training in Work Conditioning

While work conditioning is not a typical gym workout, working on strength and endurance are still important components of a work conditioning program. As we get older, we lose muscle mass and this can lead to a loss of balance and flexibility, which in turn leads to injuries or re-injuries.



One helpful tool for strengthening and improving balance is the use of a **BOSU** ball. This is a “half-ball” used for stability and when used properly, improves balance, strength and flexibility. These improvements lead to better posture, less back pain and improved performance in work tasks such as climbing ladders, stairs, walking on uneven terrain, crawling, bending and squatting. Incorporating the use of a BOSU ball with job specific tasks such as pulling electrical wire or doing upper body movements while balancing on the ball, also serves to strengthen knee & leg muscles and gives the worker more confidence in performing job tasks.

### Top Five Things that Work Conditioning Programs are NOT:

- 1) **More Physical Therapy** – 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.
- 2) **2-3 days per week** – Work Conditioning is a **progressive daily program** that offers the opportunity to determine the injured worker’s 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.
- 3) **A typical gym workout** – A work conditioning facility should have various job specific tools and equipment available for injured workers to practice job tasks safely. Hand tools, motors, yarn buggies, sheets of drywall, a shoveling station, ladders and other equipment should be a normal part of a work conditioning space. Although strength and endurance training is part of a work conditioning program, they are not the ultimate goals of the program.
- 4) **Expensive** – Some recent data from OSHA cited in Professional Safety Magazine indicates musculoskeletal disorders “continue for the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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!)**

### Our Services:

- Functional Capacity Evaluations
- Work Conditioning
- Job Analyses
- Fit for Duty Testing
- Employment Testing

*Continued on next page...*

*“Work Conditioning addresses the individual needs of the injured worker as it relates to their return to a specific job or job type.”*



One of our former work conditioning patients working with Ernie. Full video can be found on our YouTube page: <http://youtu.be/KYin1QNEkJU>

**“Strength Training in Work Conditioning” cont.**

- 5) **“A Black Hole”** – The average length of a work conditioning program should be 2-4 weeks, with documentation of progression in reaching the goals of return to work. A re-evaluation every 10 visits should take place and if there is no progression, discharge should be recommended. If there is a pattern of no-shows or lack of effort, discharge from the program should take place.

-Submitted in part by Ernie Lopez, Work Conditioning Coordinator at Job Ready

**More Facts about the Work Conditioning Program at Job Ready Services**

- Avg # of visits: 18
- Avg time out of work at time of referral: 1 year
- Recommendation for Return to Work after program completion: 40%
- Reasons for not completing program: Atty cancelled; discharged due to lack of effort; patient declined to continue; Adjuster/Case Manager/Network provider did not authorize continuation; further medical evaluation needed.

**FREE Lunch and Learn**

**Thursday, August 16, 2012**

12:00pm – 1:00pm

**Topic: Take Shape for Life**

Speaker: Debra Lord, President of Job Ready Services

Cost: Free

No credits available.

Location: Job Ready office in Raleigh, NC

To register: <http://www.jobreadyservices.net/index.php/contact/lunch-and-learn-registration/> or visit our website and click on “education”



A Message From Debra: I have been overweight all my life and have tried a myriad of diets. Some were successful in that I was able to lose weight, but I did not feel well while doing it and would soon gain it back and more. In May while at a conference on wellness initiatives, I was introduced to TSFL and the Medifast 5 in 1 plan. Something clicked that I could offer this to my clients. There was one problem: how could I recommend the program if I couldn't make it work for me?

I started in late June and lost 20 lbs the first 2 weeks. It was easy because all I had to do was eat 6 meals a day. I started out losing a pound a day for 8 weeks and now average 3-5 lbs a week. I feel better, have a lot more energy and have found myself wanting to work out. Come learn more about this program and see if it could be a good fit for your employees, clients, or self!

**Upcoming Events**

- July 25 – Debra Lord to speak at the NCALGESO conference – Wilmington, NC

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