TOP FIVE BENEFITS OF ERGONOMICS
In today’s modern world, working from 9 to 5 is a common way of life. On average, 95% of the time in an office is spent in front of a computer or electronic devices. In this process, we often forget that our bodies endure enormous physical, psychological, and repetitive stress which attributes to many chronic diseases such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders, and many others issues that we are not aware of. Prolonged sitting is devastating for your health. Based on a research study done by JAMA Internal Medicine, Australian adults who sat for more than 8-11 hours a day had a 15 percent increased risk of dying within 3 years, compared to those who sat for less than 4 hours a day. In simple words, the human body is not built to be sitting all day long.

We assume that vigorous exercise can counteract the adverse effects of long office hours, but this is not the case. In order to have a safe and healthy work environment, we must ensure that our working space is adjusted to our needs and preferences as well.

**DESIGNING A PRODUCTIVE WORKPLACE**

Every company should establish a program that addresses the interactions among humans and the environment, i.e. the person and their workstation. A scientific discipline that is important when creating such a program is ergonomics. The term comes from the Greek words ergon=work, and nomos=laws thus, the laws of work. In plain English, it’s study of work. It’s basically the science of fitting the job to the worker, and not the other way around.

Some companies provide their employees with assessments for their work station and help them prevent injuries. They focus on workstation design that has a big impact on their employee’s health and well being. Workstation design is complemented by understanding the symptoms of work, its related injuries, and assessing their causes when analyzing: lengthy periods of repetitive activity, awkward work positions, and uncomfortable environmental conditions, all contribute to a stressful work environment.

Designing a productive workplace means taking into account the employees’ feedback along with the above mentioned activities, before preparing and implementing a training program. This training will guide employees through the correct practices and/or activities that should be followed in order to mitigate the risk of injuries.

The implementation of the program includes details on correct postures while sitting, arrangement of the workstation, adjustments and usage of the keyboard mouse, monitor position, lighting and associated ergonomic equipment.

One of the new pieces of ergonomic office equipment that people have found useful is a “Stand-up desk” that encourages you to stay active and productive throughout the day. It has an adjustable height desk that helps you to move from standing to sitting and back again. Therefore, using the correct approach and ergonomic equipment while designing your workflow, will make for a more comfortable working environment.
The health benefits of ergonomics programs are beneficial to both employers and employees, which can be demonstrated in many different forms e.g lowering absenteeism and sickness levels, in turn leading to more productive uptime and lower stress levels.

- **Ergonomics improves productivity** - Implemented correctly, an ergonomic solution improves productivity from 10 to 15%. Ergonomics leads to healthy and pain-free employees. By designing a working environment which encourages good posture, less exertion, and fewer motions, in turn makes the workstation more efficient.

- **Ergonomics improves quality** - Poor ergonomics leads to frustrated and fatigued workers who will not be able to give off their best. When the job or task is physically too difficult for the employee, they may not perform their job or task as they have been trained to do. This will damage the reputation of the company and its products.

- **Ergonomics improves employee’s engagement** - Employees notice when the company is providing them with the best conditions to improve their employees’ health and safety. If an employee does not experience fatigue and discomfort during their working day, it can reduce absenteeism, improve morale and increase your employees’ involvement. This in turn will have the knock-on effect of increasing your employees’ motivation simply by implementing your ergonomic improvement program.

- **Ergonomics creates an improved understanding and awareness leading to safety oriented culture** - Ergonomics shows your company’s commitment to safety and health as a core value. Healthy employees are your most valuable asset; creating and fostering a healthy culture within your company leads directly to increased level of organizational structure.

- **Costs involved in employing ergonomic methods and equipment** - Many studies have shown that ergonomics doesn't have to be costly and can even save you money. The cost of ergonomic training, or an OHSAS 18001 (Occupational Health and Safety) training program, is cost effective as by investing in your employee’s health & wellbeing will prevent costly injuries and lost time, leading to systematically increasing your revenues and customer satisfaction levels. The Health and safety of employees are one of the strongest assets that a company has that should be nourished.

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