

Interface

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Lean Efforts With Limited Resources

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Despite limited resources, you can still support lean activities and blitzes from an ergonomics standpoint.

In the current U.S. manufacturing climate, we know that most companies are taking serious strides toward being a lean organization through eliminating waste and implementing lean tools (e.g., 5S, kanban) to sustain and improve company performance. To do so, specialized lean implementation teams are formulated, and their goal is to “blitz” each operation, cell, feeder line and assembly line within each department to improve throughput. We

It may be a challenge to support the lean enterprise implementation team in this current economy, but by following these steps, you can make a large impact without a draw on costs or resources.

have finally realized the value of lean efforts and more importantly that lean culture is assimilated across all levels of the company.

Despite limited resources, you can still support lean activities and blitzes from an ergonomics standpoint:

- Create and circulate an easy-to-reference pocket guide with a list of the most applicable ergonomic

continued on page 18



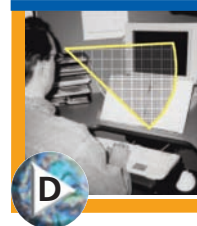
**PAGE 6
ERGONOMICS**
The Aging Workforce



**PAGE 8
ERGONOMICS**
The Concept of Universal Design



**PAGE 12
BEST PRACTICES**
Managing Ergonomics



**PAGE 15
OFFICE ERGONOMICS**
Computer Work & Visual Demands

**For a complete
Table of Contents
see page 3**

Ergonomic Considerations for the Aging Workforce

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has projected that U.S. workforce demographics will begin to “gray” during the next decade. BLS has predicted that the percentage of workers age 65 to 74 will increase by 83.4% during the years 2006-16. The percentage of workers age 74 and older will increase by 84.3% during this same time period. Due to this dramatic increase in workers over age 65, ergonomic considerations must be made to accommodate this aging workforce.

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As the human body ages, visual acuity (eye sight), hearing, joint flexibility and muscular strength/endorance diminish. Also of importance is the fact that reflex/reaction time increase. Ergonomic considerations to combat these changes due to the aging process include:

VISUAL ACUITY (EYESIGHT)

- 1) Increase area lighting.
- 2) Reduce glare.
- 3) Increase the font size on communications (e.g., reports, internal memos).
- 4) Adjust the contrast on computer screens to contrast the text with the background color.

HEARING

- 1) Reduce background noises.
- 2) If in a loud environment, use protective hearing equipment to help minimize additional hearing loss.
- 3) Use equipment to magnify audio communications (e.g., headsets to amplify speech).

JOINT FLEXIBILITY, MUSCULAR STRENGTH/ENDURANCE

- 1) Reduce the weight and frequency of items handled.
- 2) Increase rest and recovery time between tasks, while also encouraging the worker to stretch.
- 3) Use mechanical-assistance devices to reduce materials handling tasks.
- 4) If applicable, use job rotations to avoid repetitive strain injuries.



- 5) Encourage the workers to use leverage if possible to avoid repetitive grasping.
- 6) Provide training on proper/safe lifting techniques as well as the importance of neutral postures.
- 7) Place frequently handled items at waist level.

REFLEX/REACTION TIME

- 1) Eliminate trip hazards in the work environment.
- 2) Avoid placing items at floor and overhead levels.
- 3) Properly illuminate walking/travelling areas.
- 4) Eliminate clutter within the workstation. ☺

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