

Proactive office ergonomics can increase job satisfaction and employee retention

September 9 2014

As the amount of time employees spend at their desks increases, so does musculoskeletal discomfort and other health issues associated with the office environment. Although office ergonomics training programs have been shown to improve employee well-being and productivity, in many cases training occurs only after complaints are logged. New research to be presented at the HFES 2014 Annual Meeting in Chicago demonstrates that a comprehensive and proactive workplace ergonomics program can help to prevent discomfort and injury.

Alan Hedge, coauthor of "Proactive Office Ergonomics Really Works" and a professor at Cornell University's Department of Design and Environmental Analysis, says, "Proactive programs are preventive and aim to design out problems before the workplace is built, making it much easier to maintain and manage."

Hedge and coauthor Jonathan Puleio surveyed more than 200 employees at a software company that was relocating to a new facility with a proactive program that included ergonomic workstations, group training, and one-on-one consultations. Participants offered their opinion on how this new program compared with their former workplace, which did not provide ergonomic equipment or routine assessments.

After the relocation, employees reported significantly less musculoskeletal and visual discomfort and higher levels of job satisfaction and happiness. They also said they thought the ergonomics program would likely enhance company retention and recruitment.

"A good ergonomics program is extremely beneficial to both employers and [employees](#)," said Hedge. "It is a highly cost-effective way to improve performance, health and well-being, and happiness. We can expect even better results for companies that fully commit to the ergonomic redesign of their workplaces and the establishment of a proactive [ergonomics](#) program."

Provided by Human Factors and Ergonomics Society

Citation: Proactive office ergonomics can increase job satisfaction and employee retention (2014, September 9) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-09-proactive-office-ergonomics-job-satisfaction.html>

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