

Rachel Vimont, DPT, CEAS
Physical Therapist
Student Health Center

Professional Development Grant went toward a Continuing Education Class.

Level I: Musculoskeletal Disorders and Ergonomics Certification Workshop put on by Ronald W Porter, P.T. CEAS of the Back School of Atlanta. This was a two day workshop from 11/29 and 11/30. That reviewed work site assessments of both industrial and office jobs.

The course used OSHA (**Occupational Safety & Health Administration**)-compliant assessment tools the W-1 Basic Screening Tool and Appendix D-2 which is a VDT (visual display terminal) Workstation Check list. In addition we reviewed WAC Awkward Posture guidelines which allows you to calculate the amount of time, frequency and weight that is safe for an employee to lift. This is very interesting to those of us who deal with injured patients on a daily basis. It assists with the discussions for return to activity.

The course work has already been directly applied to SJSU students/patients. Patients have been bringing in digital photos of themselves at their “workstation” so that we can review what might be contributing to the delay in their rehabilitation. This is a means of doing ergonomics assessment of an individuals work/study station. The patients have a direct visual link and can usually tell me what they see as limiting or impinging on their successful outcomes. It has be a proactive way of involving the students to resolve ergonomic factors that contribute to symptoms. While we all know we should sit up and have our monitors directly in front of us a picture can be worth a 1,000 words.

Here are some fun “gems” from the ergonomics class for each of us to try today.

- ❑ Check the adjustments on the chair you are currently sitting in. See if you can change it so that you feel more supported. Specifically so your lower back feel supported. It is ok to adjust your chair through out the day.
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/positions.html>
- ❑ Keep things you use all the time in your easy reach zone. For most of us this is a maximum of 16-18 inches in front of you.
- ❑ If you use a keyboard and want to know if your hands/wrists are in “neutral” try balancing a pencil on the back of each wrist (point the tip of the pencil between middle and index finger) while you type. If you can balance the pencils chances are that your wrist are in a neutral position.

The Physical Therapy Department in conjunction with the Pre-Physical Therapy club is preparing a pod cast for ergonomic mini-breaks that can be down loaded to your desk top. This should be completed by spring of 2008. For the first installment we will be doing an ergo-break for those who work at a computer station or study.

Human Resources have a Safety Specialist Michaux Burchard michaux.burchard@sjsu.edu Michaux can come to your office and specifically do an individual ergonomics assessment for the SJSU Staff. If you have students who need assistance, remember that they can be referred to Physical Therapy by any Student Health Center Clinical staff. I can work one on one with him or her to address these topics if the individual is having trouble. However if any department would like to review mini-ergo-breaks they can contact me at my email rvimont@sjsu.edu. The best times for our office to present would

be summer or winter session. Another helpful website is on the topic of ergonomics is <http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/>

Upon returning from the course I presented as part of the Human Resources Risk and Compliance Unit Wellness Lecture Series: “Basic Body Mechanics and Healthy Back for Life” December 12 at 12-1pm.