



Keeping Workers at Work with an Onsite Physiotherapist





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Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSD) are the leading cause of work disability and productivity loss in the developed world.

Risk factors for developing WMSD include repetitious and forceful work, awkward and sustained postures, vibration, heavy lifting and temperature extremes. Work pace and monotony also play a role as well as age, gender and health status.

While primary prevention is the key, early secondary prevention is a necessary part of the process. Early treatment of WMSD has been shown to reduce insurance costs and promote successful return to work. Having a system in place to manage these types of injuries can help to minimize loss of production and maximize worker retention and satisfaction levels.

To this end, utilizing the diagnostic and acute injury management skills of a physiotherapist on the worksite can facilitate early treatment and work-related functional rehabilitation. This allows the worker to, where possible, remain productive and engaged at work and can reduce the likelihood of injuries leading to insurance claims.

Many studies cite other benefits such as improved patient satisfaction, fewer treatment visits and an earlier return to work.

A 13-year study looking at the implementation of on-site physiotherapy at a Canadian automotive factory found that the average number of treatment visits per worker at their on-site clinic was 8.3 compared to the country total of 10.5. Their work-loss claims were dramatically reduced, along with a reduction of overall insurance premiums.

The same can apply for employees who attend work with an injury suffered outside of working hours. While you may not be culpable, you will still incur some expenses if that employee has to have time off.

Potential benefits for businesses include:

- Reduced lost time (LTI) injuries
- Improved diagnosis and musculoskeletal injury referral protocols
- Reduced medically treated (MTI) injuries

By using a physiotherapist minor WRMD can be diagnosed and treated on the spot, while more complex conditions can be referred on to a GP

- Reduced rehabilitation costs

By having the therapist on-site rehabilitation can be **given greater direction and purpose**

- Reduced Workcover claim costs and premiums
- Reduced absenteeism and presenteeism
- Increased workforce health, safety and wellbeing
- Improved compliance with OH&S legislative obligations



Potential benefits for workers include:

- Earlier treatment of symptoms to prevent injuries
- Reduce pain and impairment
- Job-specific rehabilitation to maximise recovery and minimise recurrence
- Improved health, wellbeing and morale
- Increased productivity

