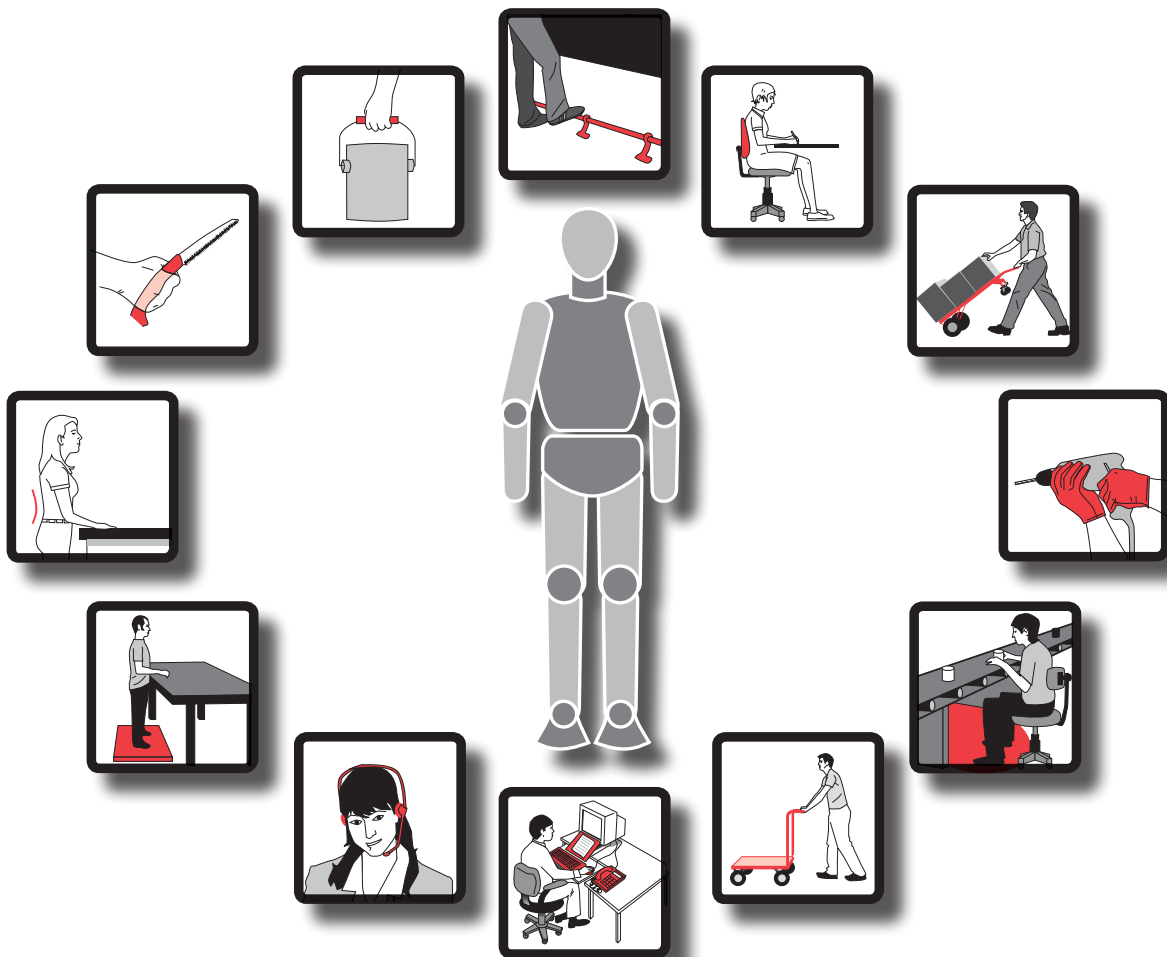


Workplace Job Accommodations Solutions for Effective Return to Work



OHC
MFL Occupational
Health Centre



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WORK**

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Workplace Job Accommodations

Solutions for Effective Return to Work

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Disclaimer

The material contained in this resource guide is for information and reference purposes only and not intended as legal or professional advice. The adoption and/or use of the information, and/or practices described in this resource guide may not meet the needs, requirements or obligations of individual workplaces or individual return to work cases.

Workplace Job Accommodations

Solutions for Effective Return to Work

Effective job accommodations for return to work programs include input from workers, the workplace, and health care professionals.

The following job accommodation examples are based on the work of the Occupational Health Centres Quality of Life of Workers in a Return to Work project. This project studied the quality of life of workers with musculoskeletal injuries in a return to work program and documented their specific job accommodations. For more information on this project, contact the Occupational Health Centre.

The most successful return to work cases involved making changes to the physical demands and working conditions of the worker's existing job.

Ergonomic change was the key job accommodation strategy.

There are many strategies for returning an injured worker to safe work. The following examples only focus on ergonomic job accommodations. These examples helped to accommodate a wide range of injured workers. However, it was the moderate to long term musculoskeletal injuries that had the most success from the implemented changes.

This **resource guide** contains information on job accommodation principles and examples for the most common musculoskeletal injuries. It is separated into four sections:

Back Injuries

Hand Injuries

Leg Injuries

Neck and Shoulder Injuries

A **job accommodation worksheet**, page 8, is included to help identify solutions based on the job accommodation principles and the specific physical demands of the task. An example worksheet is included.

A **resource section** provides contact information for agencies in Manitoba that can help with the Return to Work Process and Ergonomics.

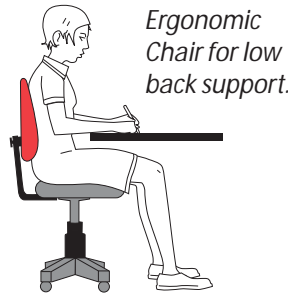
Low Back Injuries

To accommodate low back injuries, keep the following points in mind:

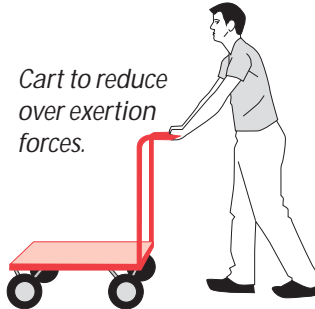
1) maintain the natural lumbar curve of the lower back,



2) provide support for the lower back,



3) reduce over exertion forces acting on the lower back.



Job Accommodation Solutions:

WORKPLACE DEMANDS	EXAMPLES
Sitting Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Provide an adjustable chair with a lumbar cushion to support the lower back. ‡ Keep objects within a short reach to avoid bending forward.
Standing Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Provide height adjustable equipment (work table or platform) with a footrest to reduce low back stress. ‡ Provide a foot rail to allow workers to change posture.
Vibrations or Jarring Motions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Provide a lumbar support device or anti-vibration padding to reduce mechanical stress to the lower back. ‡ Eliminate vibration or jarring motion with engineering fixes.
Reaching or Stooping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Keep objects within a short reach. This will reduce stooping and keep strain off the lower back while leaning forward. ‡ Remove barriers, design workstations with leg clearance or purchase equipment that allows the worker to reduce reaches. ‡ Purchase worktable height adjustable cylinders to reduce stooping. ‡ Provide tool extenders to reduce stooping and reaching.

Low Back Injuries

Job Accommodation Solutions Continued:

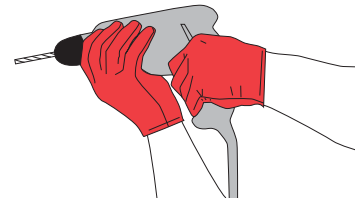
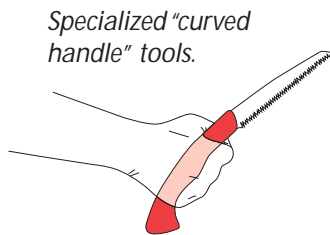
WORKPLACE DEMANDS	EXAMPLES
<p>Manual Material Handling (MMH)</p> <p>Lifting, Lowering, Pushing, Pulling and Carrying Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Provide equipment (hoists, lifting devices, articulating arms) to place objects at waist height or to eliminate handling of the object. ‡ Reduce the weight of the object by decreasing its size, the amount of material in the container or the container (tare) weight. ‡ Push objects instead of pulling. Use low friction materials to reduce exertion forces. ‡ Redesign the workstation or object to bring it closer to the body when lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling or carrying. ‡ Eliminate obstructions that prevent the object from being lifted with good posture. ‡ Provide platforms, risers, bedsteads or stacked pallets to position objects from knee to chest height. ‡ Use gravity (rollers, conveyors, chutes, vertical feed lines) to improve manual material handling. ‡ Provide handles or hand holes to facilitate gripping of the object. ‡ Reduce carrying distances by making changes to the layout or by using powered or mechanized equipment. ‡ Reduce obstacles that may lead to slip and trip falls or awkward carrying. ‡ Use carts that are designed for the task, i.e., long straight aisles, frequent turns, long heavy loads and floor type (concrete vs linoleum). ‡ Consider making workstation layout changes or provide adequate space to reduce twisting. ‡ Visual line of sight is important for proper lifting. Improve lighting, reduce glare and shadows and remove visual obstacles. ‡ Manual material handling increases body heat. Use layered and vented clothing to control body heat. ‡ Working in the cold affects the body. Wear adequate clothing to keep the hands and body warm. ‡ Purchase or design jigs or fixtures to reduce static holding of objects, allow for changes in posture and to reduce exertion forces.



Hand Injuries

To accommodate hand injuries, keep the following points in mind:

- 1) Minimize bending of the wrists,
- 2) Avoid pinch gripping with forceful exertions,
- 3) Minimize vibration, and cold,
- 4) Avoid mechanical pressure (hard or sharp objects putting pressure on the wrists, palm or fingers).



Job Accommodation Solutions:

WORKPLACE DEMANDS	EXAMPLES
Excessive Wrist Bending and Repetitive Wrist Motions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Provide ergonomic tools or changes to the layout of workstations or equipment to improve wrist postures. ‡ Design the task to use different body parts and allow for larger muscles to perform the task ‡ Provide tools, jigs or fixtures to reduce grip forces and repetitive motions.
Forceful Exertions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Provide more efficient tools or other modifications to reduce grip forces and minimize pinch gripping. ‡ Increase the size of tool handles to reduce pinch gripping.
Vibration and Cold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Provide proper gloves to reduce vibration and cold. ‡ Design the task to reduce vibration and exposure to cold.
Mechanical Pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Provide gloves with padding to reduce mechanical pressure to the hands, round the edges of workstations or pad the tool or equipment. ‡ Increase the size of the tool or object to eliminate mechanical pressure on the fingers and hands.

Lower Leg Injuries

To accommodate lower leg injuries, keep the following points in mind:

- 1) Improve mobility and reduce fatigue from lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, and carrying,
- 2) Reduce static postures when sitting and/or standing.



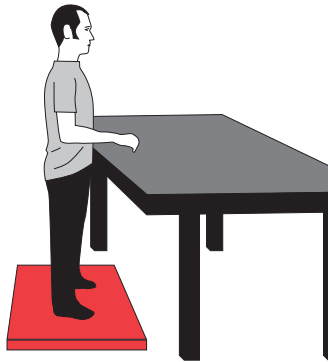
Job Accommodation Solutions:

WORKPLACE DEMANDS	EXAMPLES
Manual Material Handling (MMH) and Mobility Issues (kneeling, squatting, leg clearance, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the placement of tools and equipment to improve mobility. Provide adequate clearances and space for the feet, knees and thighs. This will allow for posture changes and reduce fatigue. Are the thighs or legs leaning or resting against a sharp edge on tools or equipment. Round the edge or provide padding to reduce mechanical pressure on the legs.
Sitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an ergonomic chair or sit/stand stool with a footrest. Design the workstation to alternate between sitting and standing. For driving on rough surfaces or exposure to whole body vibration, isolate the seat from the vehicle, maintain the floor surface, dampen the vibration or provide an ergonomic seat.
Standing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a footrest or rail so the legs can be supported and workers can change posture. Provide anti-fatigue matting. Provide adequate floor space to change foot positions.

Neck and Shoulder Injuries

To accommodate neck and shoulder injuries, keep the following points in mind:

- 1) Keep objects within short reaches while keeping the elbows close to the body,
- 2) Eliminate shoulder shrugging (i.e., proper working height),
- 3) Reducing neck bending, twisting and vision issues.



A headset eliminates neck bending and twisting.

Job Accommodation Solutions:

WORKPLACE DEMANDS	EXAMPLES
Far Reaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † 6VdY` dSU [Y adUa` hVkadefa dVgUdVBUZ [Yz 7j S_ bVd [UgVW Ydshfk [XVW dSU [Yt bcdhV [Y ebSUWTVi VV bS^Vefafa YWUaeVdafa S aTVVfS VSVgefST VV S j VUa` hVkadz † =Vb dVBUZVefa fZW\$ aiUaUj S V#` aiUaUj baeffa` S Vi [fz] S\$` Z& [LZ dVBUZ / "Z" U_ fi FZ [ei [^] Vb fZWV ai eUaeVfa fZWV avk S V dVgUW eZagVWdefd [z † 7 [[SFWS k dVBUZ [Y TVZ [V fZWV avkz
Improper Working Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † Bcdh[VWZVYzfSVgefST Mb Sfxd_ eadi ad TWUZVefa dVgUW eZagVWd eZdjYY [Yz † 5ZS` YWZWaUSf[a` adaqWfSf[a` aXi ad adbcdh[VW]YeadXj fgdVefa [bcdhV eZagVWd baefgdVz † ? aV [k faa`ZS` VVefa] Vb VV ai eUaeVfa fZWV avkz
Neck Bending, Twisting and Vision Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † Bcdh[VMSZVSeV adValg_ Wf Za VVdafa dVgUW VU] TWV [Yz † ;_ bcdhW [Yzf] Y fa dVgUW eZSV ai eS VY SdV † Bcdh[VMSVgefST W ad fST VeadXj fgdVefa [bcdhVh [W [Y S YVdS V `VU] baefgdV † F [f fZW ad egdSUafa dVgUW VU] TWV [Yz

Neck and Shoulder Injuries

Job Accommodation Solutions Continued:

WORKPLACE DEMANDS	EXAMPLES
Forceful Exertions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † 5ZS' YWfZWbaeffja` aXfZWbcbVgUf adfaa`fa S^ai XadYaaV eZag^Vvd baefgdV]VWb fZVWMTai eU^aeWfa fZWTaVkz † GeWbai Vdfaa`ei [fZ fact:gVdVgUfja` Sd_ eadSgfa_ Sf[Uezgf aXefa dVgUWadVWg^VjVdfja` eZ † ? WZS' [l WfSe] efa dVgUWadVWg^VjVdfja` e, VjS_ b^e[UgVWSgfa_ Sf[U Taff^WabWVd^ STWVd^S V f[f[Y!ei [hWi ad`efSfa` eZ † BcbWdXff[Y Y^ahV^eUS dVgUWqdb XadV^Z FZ[e[fgd dVgUW^eZag^Vvd _ geUWadV^Z † ;_ bcbhW [YZf[Y/_ adVjYZf dVgUWY^SdV^S V eZSVai efUS [bcbhW ^Wj S V eZag^Vvd baefgd^S V dVgUWadVWg^VjVdfja` eZ † Bcbh[VMSd_ d^f egbbacfe Xadi ad`efSfa` eZ † Bcbh[VWVj[T MSd_ US_ befa SVgef e_ S^faa`eadXj fgdV^ [fa TVV^Vd baefja` eZ † Baefja` Vtq]b_ WfV[eb^Skefa dVgUW Wj TWV[Yif [ef[YfS V V^WV efd[z
Manual Material Handling (MMH) Lifting, Lowering, Pushing, Pulling and Carrying Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † ? S k aXfZWegYYVdfja` e [efW Xad>ai 4SU ;` gqVeg` Vvd? S` gS^? S^VdS^ : S V [Yf bSYW^US` TWgeW XadEZag^Vvd;` gqV^Z † =Wb aTVVfeTWai eZag^VvdZVjZfz † 6VdY` UScf ZS V^eaa fZVWMTai eUS TWj Wbf U^aeWfa fZWTaVkz † 6VdY` UScf ZS V^eafZSfUS` TWSVgefW hVd[US^k ad^a` Y ZS V^eaa i ad`V^eUS` b^SUNFZV^dZS` Ve[fZW_ aefUa_ XadST^Mbaefja` z † Bcbh[VWZS` V^eafa aTVVfefafa [bcbhWqdbb[Y baefgdV^Z † 6[ebWeV_ SfVd[S^ [fa e_ S^VdUa` fS[V^eXadVSeV^Vbagd[Yz † 7 [[SfV^S k_ affa` fZSf[UgVW^bgeZ[Y adbg^f Y TVZ[V fZWTaVkz † DVgUWfZWS_ ag` faXf [Wfa Za^Va` fa S` aTVVfTkgef Y_ WZS' [l W Vtq]b_ Wf Y^eadXj fgdV^eadfaa^TSS` U^Z



Job Accommodations and Type of Physical Demand Restriction Worksheet

Department: _____

Date: _____

Task: _____

Shift: _____

Analyst: _____

Job Accommodation Worksheet

PHYSICAL DEMANDS	AFFECTED BODY AREAS AND JOB RESTRICTIONS/ CAPABILITIES	TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, LAYOUT OR OTHER SOLUTION IDEAS
Manual Material Handling: Lifting, Lowering, Pushing, Pulling, Carrying		
Mobility: Standing, Sitting, Walking, Climbing, Balancing, Crawling, Crouching, Kneeling		
Posture: Stooping, Bending, Reaching, Raising Arms Above Shoulders, Use of Both Hands (or either one)		
Other Demands: Working in Heat/Cold, Use of Heavy Equipment, Vibration, Noise, Chemical Exposure, Allergies, Moving Machinery, Working at Heights		
Comments		



Job Accommodations and Type of Physical Demand Restriction Worksheet

Department: _____ Date: _____

Task: _____ Shift: _____ Analyst: _____

Job Accommodation Worksheet

PHYSICAL DEMANDS	AFFECTED BODY AREAS AND JOB RESTRICTIONS/ CAPABILITIES	TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, LAYOUT OR OTHER SOLUTION IDEAS
Manual Material Handling: Lifting, Lowering, Pushing, Pulling, Carrying	- Upper and Lower Back, Right Leg - Capable of lifting up to 10 lbs infrequently.	- Provide a lifting device to reduce the weight. - Provide a conveyor to eliminate lifting and carrying.
Mobility: Standing, Sitting, Walking, Climbing, Balancing, Crawling, Crouching, Kneeling	- Upper and Lower Back, Right Leg. - Capable of standing and sitting but limited to other demands such as walking and climbing.	- Provide an adjustable chair and or height adjustable worktable. - Provide a footrest while standing and sitting. Change the layout to reduce walking.
Posture: Stooping, Bending, Reaching, Raising Arms Above Shoulders, Use of Both Hands (or either one)	- Upper and Lower Back, Right Leg. - Not capable of stooping or bending frequently or static postures.	- Provide adjustable equipment and alternatives to standing, sitting or stooping. - Also, consider reducing reaches to eliminate bending.
Other Demands: Working in Heat/Cold, Use of Heavy Equipment, Vibration, Noise, Chemical Exposure, Allergies, Moving Machinery, Working at Heights	- Upper and Lower Back, Right Leg. - Avoid working in the cold and use of heavy machinery.	- Provide cold weather gear if required. - Is working with heavy equipment an essential duty of the job?
Comments	- This example is not designed for a specific task or injury. - It allows for ideas to be documented while considering the capabilities of the injured worker while focusing on ergonomic changes.	

