



# taylor'd

## ERGO TIMES



### Our mission:

Inspiring, building, and supporting partnership between your organisation and our innovative team to advance ergonomics excellence.

## Obesity and the workplace

If you're struggling with weight, you're in good company. One in four Canadian adults is obese, and many more are overweight (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-624-x/2014001/article/11922-eng.htm>). This proportion is increasing; in just one decade, Stats Can reports that obesity rates increased by almost 20%. In Stats Canada's view, an obese person has a body-mass index (BMI) of 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more. If you know your weight and height in metric, you can calculate your BMI as follows: (body weight in kg)÷(height in meters)<sup>2</sup>. For those of us who still think of height and weight in imperial units, our BMI is (weight in lbs)÷(height in inches)<sup>2</sup> x 703. If you just did that calculation and were relieved to find that you are not "obese", you may be interested to know that Stats Can considers "normal health risk" (I think they mean "healthy") to include the BMI range from 18.5-24.9 (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-624-x/2014001/article/11922-eng.htm#a8>). That puts many, many, many of us in the precarious "overweight but not quite obese" category (BMI 25-30).

We've done a bit of research in this area. Here are some of our thoughts on this issue:

- Being overweight makes it harder to exercise. The risk of arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, and other health issues increases. A conundrum: it's harder to be active when you're overweight, and it's harder to maintain a healthy weight if you're inactive.
- As with all things, diet moderation is the key to maintaining a healthy weight. Most of us gain weight by making bad little decisions, repetitively and routinely....saying yes to the second scoop of ice cream, or the larger glass of wine....Radical calorie restriction helps to lose excess weight, but it's painful and frustrating. During every minute of every day on a "diet", we lament each bad little decision that contributed to the current hunger.
- Staying active does help. For every hour that you're outside walking, swimming, or climbing stairs, you're not only burning calories, but also NOT consuming any. And exercise suppresses your appetite. So strap on your wearable tech activity tracker and get some competition going with your friends and family. Stand up to work, and have meetings while you walk.
- Consider the effects of obesity on workers themselves, in office and industrial environments. We tell office workers, and drivers, to adjust their "workstations" so they can work with their elbows resting against the side-seam of their shirts. In this position, there is minimal muscle load on the shoulders. An obese worker reaches forward even to



### Our team

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Follow us on:



All of our ergonomists are members of:





## Shop our store!

Looking for ways to increase employee engagement with your ergo program? Post some ergo info! We've

developed **posters** on four topics:

- **Driver ergo**
- **Lifting tips**
- **Stretching**
- **Office ergo**

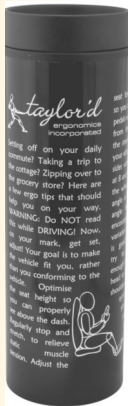
1-9, \$5.00 each  
 10-24, \$3.60 each  
 25-99, \$3.00 each  
 100+, \$2.40 each

Call us for shipping prices on volume orders. Credit cards accepted!

## Ergo travel tumblers

Order these in time for fall, when hot beverages will be in order. These insulated tumblers are wrapped with driver ergo guidelines and professional graphics.

**\$10** each, plus



hold an object that is up against the body. (See our cover photo, for example. A healthy-weight worker could type with the upper arm vertical at this workstation, with elbow touching the waist.) Similarly, bending or squatting to lift a box requires an obese worker to lift his/her own body weight as well as the load. (We all have to do this, but an obese worker has more to lift.) Consider how eager you would be to pick up dropped parts (or socks, at home), if you had to do it with a 50 lb backpack strapped to your front.

- Consider the effects of obesity on health care workers. Can one Personal Support Worker (PSW) be expected to bathe a client who weighs three times his/her own weight? What if the PSW him/herself is also obese?
- Finally, consider the effects of obesity on employers, and ergonomics (MSD risk) assessment. We are encouraged to evaluate jobs using guidelines that protect 75% of the population, and to accommodate the “extremes” individually. Our designs are intended to protect even more...if we design for an obese worker, the cost is borne by the employers, many of whom are not able to cost-justify changes that accommodate 75%, let alone 95% of the population.

Obesity presents many design and safety challenges, which need to be carefully considered. It's not going to go away, so it's best that we address it with proactive measures, helping both obese workers, and those who work with obese clients/patients. Call us for help.

## “Ergo Consultant”, or “Ergonomist”?

We are sometimes asked why we don't call ourselves “consultants”. In fact, we sometimes act as consultants on projects, where a client needs an answer to a question. (Is this job likely to cause an injury? Does this job accommodate this worker? What is the best height for this conveyor?) However, we prefer to work as *ergonomists*, by supporting clients with scheduled, regular visits. In this capacity, we can do everything a full-time ergonomist would do, but you don't need to make a “full time” commitment.



What's the difference between a consultant and an ergonomist? A consultant takes on projects, responding to specific requests. Below, we've made a list of what you could expect an *ergonomist* to do for you. Is your ergo consultant doing all this for you?

- Prioritize projects, such that the most urgent and important projects get handled first
- Research vendors, coordinate product trials with employees, seek feedback and determine the best solution for each ergo issue
- Track project status and drive implementation through follow up with key stakeholders
- Follow up on and document recent changes, promoting success stories
- Promote the awareness of ergonomics through bulletin boards, contests, sharing of resource materials, and participation in health, wellness, and safety “fairs” or awareness days
- Provide ergo training for employees to encourage them to use equipment and best practices that are available to them
- Provide technical ergo training for key stakeholders (engineering, facilities, health and safety, purchasing), so that they can actively participate in the ergo program
- Participate in company initiatives that relate to ergonomics, such as LEAN, 6 Sigma, 5S, quality improvements, productivity improvements, and facility expansions
- At least annually, evaluate the current status of the ergo program, suggest appropriate short and long term objectives, and work toward these

Some of our “consulting” projects are for clients who have in-house resources to do some or all of the tasks we've identified above. These clients only need the technical skills that we offer—we can collect data, analyse it, and provide reports. These clients take it from there. They don't need help with implementation or follow up, and their ergo programs are typically driven corporately, or by staff ergonomists or safety professionals.

If your company has 100-500 employees, there's a good chance that you could benefit from working with our “ergonomists” for support, even if you have a full time safety resource. Contact us to set up a free meeting to see how we can help. (519 623 7733 or [info@taylordergo.com](mailto:info@taylordergo.com))



## Free Ergo Speaker

If your *professional association* is looking for a speaker on an “ergo” topic, please contact Carrie. We would be happy to come out to speak with groups of human resources professionals, safety professionals, disability managers, production managers, or engineers! If you are within an hour radius of one of our offices, we can probably come at no charge! (We also offer many seminars and workshops for groups of employees—call for pricing.)



## Sit to Stand: The "Winston"

The media has been telling us for a couple of years how "sitting is killing us"....and now they've added that standing might "do more harm than good" (<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/health-wellness/articles/2015/02/17/4-ways-your-standing-desk-is-doing-more-harm-than-good>) We'd argue that too much of any one thing isn't good for you. VARIETY of movement is the key to injury prevention.

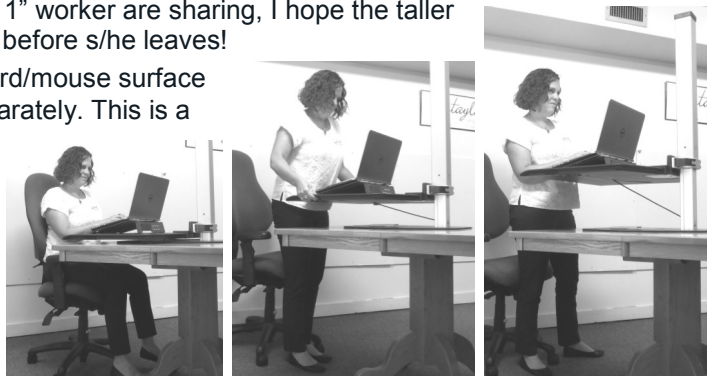
We reviewed another sit/stand product, the "Winston Sit Stand workstation", provided compliments of Innovative Office Products (<http://www.lcdarms.com>). I've included photos in this issue, but please keep in mind that we're not using the device as intended in the photos. I'm using a laptop (no external monitor), so I'm not taking advantage of the post that holds the screen, which is a pretty cool feature.

What we like:

- It's relatively inexpensive. For about \$850 you can purchase the device in Canada. (for example, at <http://ergocanada.com>)
- The surface is advertised as "generous" in size and I'd agree. There is space for a few sheets of paper and a coffee mug. It's sturdy, too.
- No power required! No crank! We found the surface easy to adjust, *upwards*.
- Great range. It will adjust from 4-47 cm above the work surface (1 ½ to 18 ½")

Limitations:

- You need a low surface to set it on. In our office/training centre, we have tables, and sit/stand desks (with cranks...they are 15 years old!) On our training table, the lowest setting of the Winston is too high for me to sit with my feet on the floor (see below).
- Even if you do have a low surface to start with, the device itself adds to the *thickness* of the worksurface. Ideally, the keyboard should sit on a surface that is at elbow height. (Sit in your chair with your thighs and forearms horizontal, upper arms relaxed. How much space do you have between your hands and your thighs? The keyboard and desk need to fit in that space. People with short torsos or long arms have very little space available.) If the desk is too thick, then the arms must be flexed (as shown in the photo at bottom left), and this will cause shoulder fatigue over time.
- Lowering the surface was not easy when it was really high. In fact, I had to climb on a step ladder to get enough leverage to push it down. Perhaps it would get easier in time, but if a 6' 3" and 5' 1" worker are sharing, I hope the taller person will push it down before s/he leaves!
- The monitor and keyboard/mouse surface need to be adjusted separately. This is a minor point, but it would take one less step if the monitor and keyboard/mouse surface adjusted in synch, rather than separately.



## Missed our blog?

Since our last newsletter, we've been talking about:

- Corraling carts: Harder than corraling cats
- Preparing for September's MOL material handing blitz
- Armrests (on an office chair) can help or hinder
- Universal design: food for thought
- Weekend garden warriors: surviving Monday morning
- Working out for work: strength training designed by ergonomists
- Driver ergo: why not steer with hands at 10 and 2
- Ergo coaching for workers: lessons learned from sports and management
- Backpacks can decrease spinal loads?
- What are electronic games doing to our kids?
- 101 ideas for your ergo program
- The rolling lumbar roll

Let us know ([info@taylordergo.com](mailto:info@taylordergo.com)) if you'd like an email reminder whenever we add to our blog.

Alternatively, follow us on twitter @taylordergo. Josie tweets links to the blog when we update it.

## SAVE A TREE, and a STAMP!

We've been tracking down newsletter recipients through Linked In. When we find you, we'll ask you if you'd be amenable to receiving a link to the newsletter (by email) instead of hard copy. BONUS: "e-news" readers will also get links to our blog, so, if you enjoy our articles and thoughts, you'll get them more often. If you really want a hard copy newsletter, we'll keep sending them as long as we can!

To convert to e-news, or to update our mailing list if you move or change jobs, send us an email at [info@taylordergo.com](mailto:info@taylordergo.com), call 519 623 7733, or fax 519 623 9164.





## Come "back-to-school" with Taylor'd Ergo



Please register me for:



**Ergo Design** Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Participants, including engineers, safety coordinators, and ergo team members, will learn to incorporate effective ergonomic design features into new workstations, jobs, and layouts, using our detailed ergo design guidelines. Guidelines include height, reach, clearance, tool selection, work flow, and more. \$425+hst HST#89765 6377



**Lifting Tips: Train-the-Trainer** Wednesday, November 18, 2014

In this one-day session, participants get hands-on practice, learning how and why to lift using 15 proper lifting techniques. They will also learn to effectively coach others to use these tips. Participants get coaching plans with sample "takeaways" to reinforce all 15 messages. \$370+hst HST#89765 6377



**Office Ergo** Wednesday, December 2

This one-day session will allow you to identify MSD hazards at office work stations, and develop cost-effective recommendations to address them. Includes suggestions for using and carrying laptops, sit/stand stations, and more. \$375+hst HST#89765 6377

**ONLINE registration and payment is now available at [www.taylordergo.com](http://www.taylordergo.com). To register the "old-fashioned way",** complete and fax this page to 519 623 9164, with your purchase order number, or mail it with a cheque to Taylor'd Ergonomics, 38 Water Street South, Cambridge, ON N1R 3C5. Your registration will be **confirmed by email, 1-2 weeks before the course**. Register early, as space is limited. Cancellations within one week of the workshop will be subject to a \$100 charge, although substitutions are welcome at any time.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ P.O.# \_\_\_\_\_ (if no PO, please send cheque with registration)

## Let us leave you with some ergo thoughts...

A strong young man at the construction site was bragging that he could outdo anyone in a feat of strength. He made a special case of making fun of Morris, one of the older workers. After several minutes, Morris had enough. "Why don't you put your money where your mouth is?" he said. "I will bet a week's wages that I can haul something in a wheelbarrow over to that building that you won't be able to wheel back." "You're on, old man," the braggart replied. "It's a bet! Let's see what you've got." Morris reached out and grabbed the wheelbarrow by the handles, then, nodding to the young man, he said, "All right. Get in." source: <http://www.jokebuddha.com/>

"From time immemorial until a decade or two ago, almost all physical activity occurred on the job. The number of people doing manual labour has plummeted, while the number of people in white-collar jobs has soared. Manual tasks in the home have also largely disappeared. We vacuum instead of sweep; we have dishwashers instead of washing dishes by hand; we have tractors to cut the lawn. And so on." <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/why-the-sedentary-life-is-killing-us/article4613704/>

If this newsletter is not correctly addressed, please, please send us an update! Fax 519 623 9164, or call 519 623 7733, or email [info@taylordergo.com](mailto:info@taylordergo.com)



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