



taylor'd ERGO TIMES

Sitting, standing, and pushing back

After all the media attention, it's not surprising that more employees are producing doctor's notes to indicate that a sit/stand station "would benefit" or is "medically necessary". The worker's medical limitations must be accommodated, but sometimes it's difficult to distinguish between a wish and a need. Should companies purchase a sit/stand for the employee with a gently worded note, while his/her co-workers stay chained in their seats? If your policy suggests that a medical condition is required in order to get a sit/stand workstation, then employees will have little trouble getting the required documentation, and you will face a deluge of accommodation issues. After all, most people experience back pain at some point in life, and everyone knows that "sitting is killing us."

Companies are starting to push back on these requests, reporting that, after a month, employees rarely use the new sit/stand stations. While that has not been our experience everywhere, we do understand the need to see payback from such a significant investment.

What should you expect as a natural consequence of implementing sit/stand workstations? If the stations are implemented well (more on that later), and if we were able to objectively measure outcomes, we believe you would see:

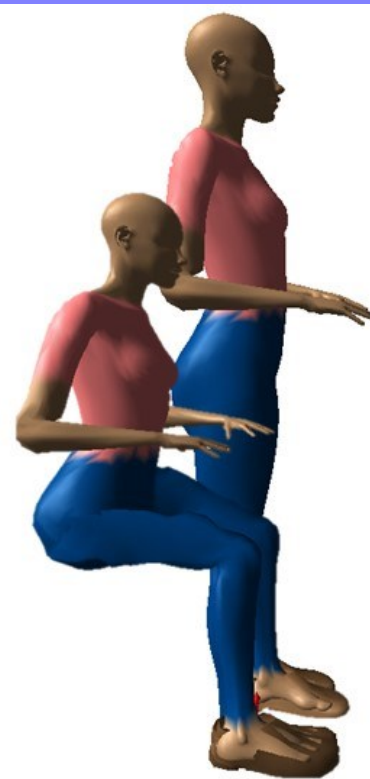
- a reduction in back, shoulder and neck pain
- improved work quality outcomes, and improved productivity
- employees who "feel better", and are therefore better employees – they feel valued, they contribute more, and they are more likely to stick around

Can we guarantee any of this? We've reported on some of the emerging research before—it's promising but not conclusive. If you are introducing sit/stand stations, we encourage you to measure pre- and post-intervention discomfort scores, productivity measures, and quality measures. (Call us for help!) Provide training when you introduce sit/stands, to ensure that people know how often to switch between sitting and standing, how long to sit or stand at a time, what type of footwear to choose, what heights are appropriate, whether matting and footrests are needed, how to move around while standing, etc. Just as we are not meant to sit all day, we are not meant to stand all day either. Encourage people to find just the right balance between sitting and standing.

In our opinion, when an employee reports musculoskeletal pain or requests a sit/stand, the

SAVE A TREE, and DON'T MISS a THING!

Over the next year, we'll be reducing our hard copy distribution, and increasing our e-news. If you enjoy our articles, you'll get more info, more often, if you **convert to e-news**. Just send us an email at info@taylordergo.com, call 519 623 7733, or fax 519 623 9164. to provide your email address. Please update us if you move!



Improving work design to exceed your goals for productivity, quality, and employee health.



Our team

Carrie Taylor
M.Sc., CCPE, CPE, R.Kin.
Principal Ergonomist

Karen Hoodless
M.Eng., CCPE, CPE
Operations Manager/Ergonomist

Josie Blake
B.Sc.(Hon.Kin.), AE
Ergonomist, London, ON

Follow us on:



All of our ergonomists are members of:



ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN ERGONOMISTS
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE D'ERGONOMIE



first step should be an office ergo assessment. An ergonomist can ensure that the employee's seated position is optimised. After all, even with a sit/stand, the employee will still be sitting for half of the day! Once this is accomplished, the discomfort often diminishes, and nothing further is needed. If pain persists, a medical opinion might be sought, to ensure that there are no contraindications to standing. Some people simply cannot tolerate standing to work, and it doesn't make sense to invest in equipment that will not be used over the long term.

Why not encourage people to stand and move more at work, without sit/stand desks? Some companies argue that seated employees simply need to take advantage of opportunities to stand and move around. For example, here are a few tasks that can provide a postural break from sitting:

- Hold meetings standing up or walking. During presentations or training, stand at the back of the room instead of sitting.
- Set reminders to take stretch breaks every hour.
- Stand up while talking on the phone (if you don't need to use the computer or take notes).
- Eat lunch and take breaks standing.
- Move recycling bins and printers to central locations and make several trips per day, if your office still uses paper!
- Go to talk to a colleague instead of phoning or emailing.
- Drink more water....take washroom breaks on another floor. Use the stairs instead of the elevator.

Are these suggestions practical? Employees who have some control over their work activities, such as managers and ergonomists, can use many of these tips. However, employees whose entire job involves a keyboard, mouse, and screen, will be challenged to maintain their productivity, if they stand to stretch, walk away, talk, or have a meeting every 30-60 minutes. **If a manager is going to feel that an employee is neglecting his/her job, or interfering with other employees' productivity, by implementing these suggestions, then a sit/stand workstation may be a more cost-effective measure.** Employees can stand, move stretch *without* abandoning their duties.

Most employers cannot replace all of their furniture—if you can, then go ahead and provide sit/stand options for everyone!

Where sit/stands need to be prioritized on a “need-to-do” basis , we offer this advice:

1. Ensure that the **employee's seated working posture** is optimized with an ergo assessment. (Chair selection, adjustment, keyboard/mouse positioning, screen position, document position, etc.) Many people find that this process addresses their discomfort.
2. Ensure that the **employee is taking advantage of all reasonable opportunities to stand and walk**. An employee who routinely takes lunch and breaks sitting at his/her desk should take more responsibility for his/her health. Ask the employee to track sitting/standing time, and monitor comfort levels. (Fitness trackers and apps are available, but not accessible to everyone.) Some people decide at this point that standing won't help.
3. A few weeks after the ergo assessment, **follow up** to see if the discomfort has lessened. Verify whether the employee has modified his/her behavior to increase standing time each day.
4. **Consider whether any lingering discomfort is compatible with the employee's seated work duration.** (An ergonomist can help here, too.)
5. Confirm that the employee is **willing to commit to a proper standing trial**, possibly at a shared “standing landing” station. Will s/he wear low-heeled, supportive footwear? Will s/he limit standing to 20-30 minutes at a time as tolerance increases?
6. **Ask for a medical opinion, if the employee may have contraindications to standing, or if his/her discomfort is not addressed through increased standing.** Does the employee's health care provider think s/he can tolerate standing? Does s/he believe that it will address the employee's symptoms?

Need help with doctor's notes, choosing furniture, or setting up a “standing landing” station for sharing? Call us!

A couple of new sit/stand products to check out:

The Altissimo was designed by Knappe and Vogt in Waterloo, and is available from Horizon Furniture (519 748 9874 or www.horizon-furniture.com). Most sit/stand products that are designed to be placed on top of an existing desk will not go lower than the desk, which creates big problems. This one has an excellent range of heights for both the keyboard and monitor, and it transitions between sitting and standing quickly and easily. It's a bit wobbly, but the built-in monitor stand is slick, and the device attaches easily to a table or desk.

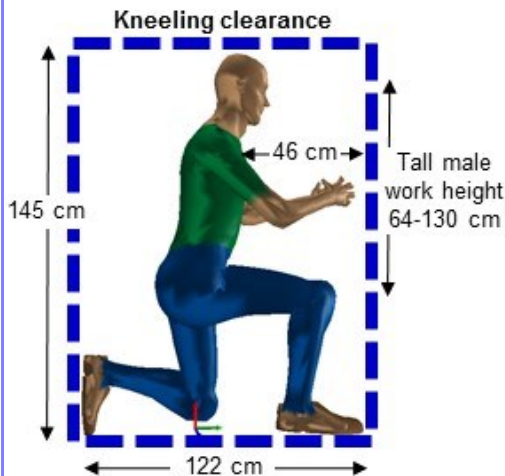
The “Sit-kicker” is a really fun way to introduce standing to an office—it comes with posters, stickers, tent cards, and an app to remind people to stand up. The actual desk is made of cardboard, so it's not height-adjustable, won't last forever, and might not be the most sturdy place for hot coffee, but it's a great conversation starter. Placed in a secure spot, it could be a good trial station (<https://www.sitkicker.com>)





Overhauled Ergo Design Guidelines

Our ergo design guidelines are currently undergoing a big review and overhaul, so if it has been a while since you participated, you may want to come back, or send a colleague for a refresher on April 27. We've added new design guidelines for material handling, and racking and shelving, and we've increased the content in several other guidelines. Here is a preview of one of the *hundreds* of design guidelines you'd learn about at our course



(including a labeled version of the sit/stand graphic on page 1!)

The graphic at left shows the clearance requirements for work while kneeling. If you are designing work that must be done in a kneeling position, you need to allow clearance for a large male.

- From this guideline, you can see that you'll need at least 122 cm for the worker to face the work, with his feet fitting between any barriers that are in front of and behind him. Think of designing a catwalk, with valve controls along one side, which need to be accessed occasionally.
- The catwalk needs to be 122 cm wide in order to allow a large worker to comfortably kneel sideways on it.
- When the large male worker is kneeling, he needs 145 cm of vertical clearance.
- The valves (or whatever he is working on) should be positioned between 64 and 130 cm above the floor (or catwalk), to allow optimum strength and effectiveness.
- When he is kneeling, his front foot will be in the way, so he'll be reaching 46 cm forward. (Adapted from the tried and true "Humanscale" published in 1981 by Henry Dreyfuss Associates)

Ergo Design

You'll learn about all of these guidelines and more, at our one-day workshop!

Down

- To ensure that clearance is available for all workers, we design for a _____ (2 words)
- A keyboard tray should adjust in height between 57-81.5 cm to _____ most seated workers.
- To allow downward force application, a handle should be _____ at the base (like a pizza cutter).
- A footrail and matting should be provided for an employee who works in a _____ position for a long period of time.
- Limit the number of colours used in a _____ to four, if it is used infrequently or by inexperienced users.

Across

- Activation force for a _____ (#)-finger strip trigger should not exceed 3.2 kg.
- If outdoor work is required, allow _____ space for clearance.
- To ensure that work is within reach for all, we design for a _____ (2 words).
- 200-500 lux is an appropriate level of _____ for visual tasks with high contrast or large size.
- _____ work should be done with the hands lower than light work.
- A tall male requires 145 cm of vertical clearance to work in a _____ position.
- Avoid high force exertions for workers who are _____ (not 7 down).
- Keep frequently used items within 36 cm forward _____.

Missed our e-news?

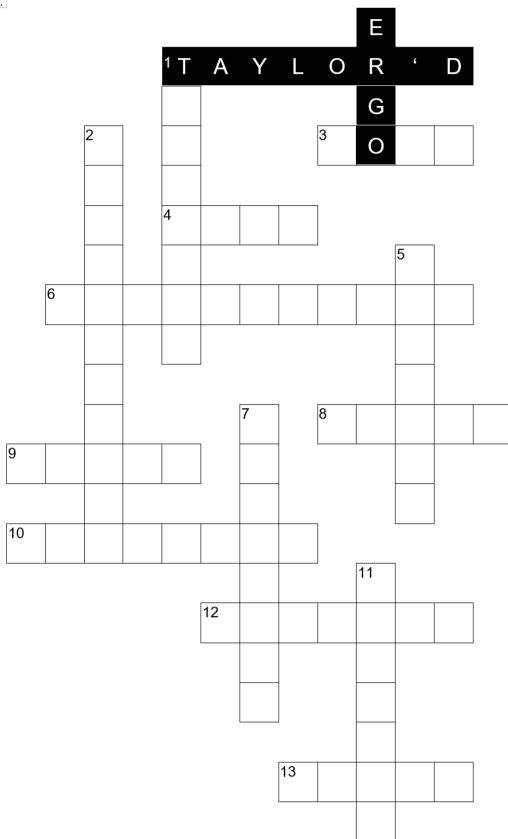
Here's what we've been blogging about lately at www.taylordergo.com/blog.

- How artificial light can help you sleep and wake more naturally
- A prescription for ergo assessment
- Ergonomic oven mitts (or gloves)
- In the loop about surgical loupes

Email us at info@taylordergo.com to ask for email links to our e-news. Alternatively, follow us on facebook or twitter @taylordergo for notice that we've posted e-news.

Thank you for "liking" and "sharing" our content—your support helps us grow!

Check out (and add to!) our 5-star reviews by googling Taylor'd Ergonomics.





Build in-house ergo resources with Taylor'd Ergo training

For more details, or to register online, please visit our website www.taylordergo.com/workshop/.

☒ Please register me for:



☐ 101 Ergo Solutions, Thurs, March 30, 2017

This course will invigorate your ergo or safety team by providing tons of ideas and case studies, and encouraging participants to look at problems with a different perspective. Learn to identify and train people to use best practices when appropriate. Learn about simple machines and how these basic mechanical concepts apply in work settings. \$370+hst HST#89765 6377



☐ Ergo Design Thursday, April 27, 2017

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, racking and shelving, manual handling, and many more. \$425+hst HST#89765 6377



☐ Physical Demands Analysis, Tues-Wed, May 9-10, 2017

This two-day session will allow participants, including ergo co-op students, nurses, safety coordinators, and return-to-work coordinators, to collect data and write an objective, concise physical demands analysis report for the WSIB, employee's doctor, physiotherapist, or for internal company use. Participants learn how to measure forces, quantify "repetition", and obtain useful workstation and task photos. \$785+hst HST#89765 6377

ONLINE registration and payment is now available at www.taylordergo.com. We're also happy to receive your registration "old-fashioned way." Just 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: _____

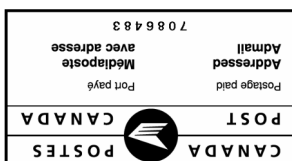
Fax: _____

e-mail: _____

P.O.# _____ (if no PO, please send cheque with registration)

Need in-house ergo training for your employees? Our hands-on, skill-based one-hour "face-2-face" sessions (driver, office, industrial, or lifting) can be provided for as little as \$275/group (4 sessions in one day), plus materials (\$5 per person), and mileage. Find more info under the "training" tab at www.taylordergo.com.

If this mailing label is incorrect, please correct it and text a photo to 905 979 0356. Or e-mail us at info@taylordergo.com.



A bi-monthly publication from
© Taylor'd Ergonomics
38 Water Street South
Cambridge, ON N1R 3C5
phone (519) 623-7733
fax (519) 623-9164
www.taylordergo.com
info@taylordergo.com