

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **For immediate release**

## **Be safe not sorry – Physiotherapists offer tried and true tips for preventing workplace injuries during Healthy Workplace Month**

Toronto, October 16 – The month of October has been designated Healthy Workplace Month by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. The Ontario Physiotherapy Association (OPA) recognizes the serious health risks and heavy economic costs associated with workplace injuries, and is offering solutions for making our work environments safer and healthier.

Every year, tens of thousands of Canadians are injured on the job. Statistics from the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada show that almost 1 million (995,891) claims were reported to WCBs and Commissions in 2006. Of those, about a third (329,357) resulted in lost time at work claims. Lost time claims involve a wide range of injuries, disorders, and diseases including a significant number of back injuries (87,091). Repetitive strain injuries (RSI) are also a growing occupational safety hazard in Canada due to Canadians' increased use of computers and hand held digital devices.

The Ontario Physiotherapy Association reminds Canadians during Healthy Workplace Month that no one is immune to injury at work. However there are many simple steps Canadians can take that will help reduce the risk of being injured in the workplace. For example, to avoid work-related repetitive strains or back and neck injuries, look for easy ways you can change your work habits and work environment to have a positive impact on your health and well being.

Physiotherapists recommend the following tips to help prevent injury at work and address work-related pain before it worsens and becomes chronic:

- Maintain correct posture while working and be sure to take frequent breaks, change your position often and keep work items that you use most frequently within easy reach to reduce stress on your neck, back, and limbs.
- If your work involves heavy activity, warm up before you start work, break up activity by doing simple stretches throughout the day, and use equipment such as a mechanical lift or a dolly to help reduce the amount of force required to transport or lift heavy items.
- Visit the OPA website ([www.opa.on.ca](http://www.opa.on.ca)) and the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety website ([www.ccohs.ca/](http://www.ccohs.ca/)) for tips on avoiding injury at work.

If simple modifications to your work space and habits don't solve the problem, consult a physiotherapist who can provide specific advice on body mechanics, strengthening exercises, posture and workplace equipment adaptations that are tailored to your particular work situation. Also, consider having an ergonomic assessment of your work environment done. If there is a risk management team at your workplace, ask for a review and be ready to make changes to your work area. Chances are, it will increase your productivity and decrease your risk of lost time and wages due to injury.

Studies show that early access to physiotherapy treatment translates to reduced treatment times and decreased costs to the healthcare system, employees, employers, and insurance companies. OPA joins the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety in urging working Canadians to address occupational safety proactively. OPA also advises working adults to address strains, pains and physical health problems on the job early on so that something can be done to change the work process and help avoid serious injury.

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