

FEATURE ARTICLE

CAN A STABILITY BALL REPLACE AN OFFICE CHAIR?

In the past few years, there have been various articles suggesting that using a stability ball as an office chair can actually help to improve your posture when sitting, by continuously activating the muscles in your back and improving your core strength – sometimes termed “active” or “dynamic” sitting. Sure, we can understand how this may have some benefits in the gym, but is there validity to using a stability ball as a replacement to a standard office chair in reducing back pain?



A recent study at the University of Waterloo (Gregory et al., 2006) may suggest otherwise. Their research indicates that prolonged exposure to muscle activation in the back can actually result in increased pain due to muscle overload, especially if rest breaks are not taken. Over the course of the day, muscles will fatigue and the user’s posture may actually worsen, placing increased stress and compression on the spine.

Using a stability ball as a chair may also pose additional risks. Since the ball is not adjustable in height, it would be challenging for the user to position themselves at their computer workstation with neutral postures (i.e. keyboard and mouse at seated elbow height, monitor in line with eye height).

Further, the unstable nature of a stability ball (irony noted!) can increase the potential for the ball to roll out from under the user as they sit or stand.

Your best bet is to select an office chair that has multiple adjustment features, including adjustable lumbar support, so that it properly fits the user.

Contact ERGO Inc. for tips and suggestions on buying an appropriate ergonomic office chair.

www.ergoconsulting.net

UPCOMING ERGO SEMINARS & EVENTS FOR 2011

ERGONOMIC CERTIFICATE WORKSHOPS

Our Spring 2011 workshops were filled to capacity! Thank you to all those who attended and made them such a success. This is what our participants said...

“Very useful and I will use in my ergo checks in the office” Maureen Lyn, Rohm & Hass Canada

“Was amazing and very informative” Joshua Broad, Newmarket Office Furniture

“Professional, objective, interesting – very useful.” Alisha McAllister, Middlesex Hospital Alliance

For more information on our Fall 2011 workshops visit www.ergoconsulting.net

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS & NEWS

Ontario Occupational Health Nurse Association Conference

ERGO Inc. will be speaking on “Participatory Ergonomics – Involving Employees in Reducing Musculoskeletal Disorders”.

June 10th, 2011 – Ottawa, ON

Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC) Welcomes ERGO Inc. as Ergonomic Expert.

As a key part of EMC’s SG continuous Improvement for the future, ERGO Inc.’s services are available to EMC members to provide a broader range of services and in-house resources. Visit www.emccanada.org or contact [ERGO Inc.](http://www.ergoconsulting.net) to find out more details.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS ANALYSES (PDAs) ARE KEY IN SUCCESSFUL RETURN TO WORK PROGRAMS

A Physical Demands Analysis (PDA) is an objective measurement and description of the essential duties of a job or task, such as posture, strength, repetition, mobility, sensory, equipment and tool requirements. The frequency and duration of each demand is documented.

PDAs can be used **reactively** for rehabilitation and return to work purposes, and **proactively** to prevent injury.

How will PDAs benefit my Return to Work program?

- ✦ Useful to determine suitability of work by comparing physical demands of the job to a worker's functional abilities
- ✦ Aids in identifying modified work and accommodation possibilities
- ✦ Helps determine if an injury is work-related
- ✦ Helps defend WSIB appeals

ERGO INFORMATION

CURRENT MOL BLITZ TARGETS INDUSTRIAL AND HEALTH CARE WORKPLACES WITH NEW AND YOUNG WORKERS

Over the next 4 months (May to August), MOL Inspectors will be focusing on the safety of new and young workers in locations such as health care establishments, retail stores, wholesalers, restaurants, vehicle sales and service, transportation, logging, wood and metal fabrication, low-rise construction projects and workplaces involving tourism, farming operations, municipalities, golf courses, landscaping operations, camps, and temporary amusement parks.

WSIB's annual report states that from 2005-2009, 36 young workers aged 15 to 24 died in work-related incidents such as falls, motor vehicle incidents and accidents involving machinery. The most common work-related injuries included sprains and strains, cuts/lacerations/punctures and bruises/contusions.

Inspections will focus on 3 key areas:

- ✦ Orientation, training and supervision
- ✦ Minimum age requirements
- ✦ Safety measures and procedures

Think your workplace safety and ergonomics program could use a boost? Call or email us today for more information on ways to build your safety program to pass a MOL inspection!

ERGO FEATURE PRODUCT

Need to increase productivity when palletizing?

PalletPal® Mechanical Level Loader



- ✦ Heavy-duty springs calibrated to bring pallet to most convenient loading and unloading height.
- ✦ Low-friction bearing supported



Evaluating Risks in Growing Occupations Inc.

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