ERGONOMIC ELASTICS…WHO KNEW?
Improving materials handling

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OLA 2014

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Today’s session

- Background/Challenge/Process
- Recommendations
- Lessons Learned
- Evaluation and Wrap up

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Challenge

23 locations + 2 bookmobiles
+ Physical circulation (7million items)
+ Holds handled (1.4 million items)

= Materials Handling challenges

Need to identify processes that are **inefficient** or **increase risk of injury**

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Who?/What?/Where?

- Advise Union and Board – materials handling is critical to success, positive customer experience, but concern for staff
- Manager team – 4 branches
- Third party consultant – objectivity, expertise, credibility
- Workflow Analyses – focused on key processes

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Recommendations

Easy Low Cost Solutions:

Minimize or eliminate unnecessary materials handling

- Stack incoming delivery directly beside the workstation where they will be checked in

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Recommendations

- Situate check-in station directly beside or close to outgoing delivery bins, with book trucks for holds, re-shelving close by staff
- Only handle materials once

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Recommendations

Reduce Movements like bending, reaching, twisting and crouching

- Take time to adjust all equipment at the start of each shift to ensure they are within easy reach
- Work at counter height, adjustable workstations when checking in materials

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Recommendations

- Work in one continuous direction – either clockwise or counterclockwise – when completing a series of tasks like checking in returns or holds

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Recommendations

- Use a book truck when pulling material to fill holds, displays, etc.
- Avoid overfilling book trucks
- Do not use the bottom shelf

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Recommendations

- Alternate tasks
- Work in teams of two
- Re-deploy casual staff

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Recommendations

Purchase inexpensive supplies or equipment:

- Kneeling pads, knee pads
- Ergonomic elastics – have better elasticity and were less expensive
- Additonal decouplers to lock & unlock DVD cases
- Anti- fatigue mats where staff spend long periods standing

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Recommendations

Moderate cost solutions:

- Purchase height adjustable tables

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Recommendations

- Replace book trucks with smaller size, larger wheels

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Recommendations

Solutions with a significant cost:

- Purchase sorters or mini sorters at locations with high circulation

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Lessons Learned

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Staff Perceptions

- It's always been done this way and it works
- Unaware that there are better tools or additional funds (decouplers, smaller book trucks, adjustable tables)
- Unaware of long term impact on health and well being (sprains and strains accounted for 42.8% of lost time claims in 2012*)

**According to a WSIB statistical report*

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Staff buy-in

- Informal conversations and brainstorming
- Constant re-evaluation
- When everyone contributes to the final decision, even when it fails, it is a lesson learned not a failure

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Moving forward

- Very easy to slip back into the old ways
- Could switch tasks between regular staff and casual staff
- Review the workflow regularly, involve new people in this process
- There is a shared language now – materials handling

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Moving forward

- Incorporate materials handling into orientations and performance reviews
- Involve H&S reps and staff knowledgeable about materials handling into the initial building project or renovation
- Work on signage

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Baby Steps

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Evaluation & Review

- How the assessments and resulting changes were received by staff?
- Any impacts on staff?
- Any impacts on customers?
- Did the project meet its goals?

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Questions? Comments?

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Thank You

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