

OHG Standard

"Setting the *standard* in Occupational Medicine"

Spring 2007

Occupational Health Group is a service offered to the business community of North Alabama by Huntsville Hospital and Decatur General Hospital Systems



Back to Basics

by Susie W. Lynn, M.D., M.S. of Occupational Health Group

Susie W. Lynn, M.D., M.S., is board certified in Internal Medicine and has been practicing occupational medicine and emergency medicine since 1992. Dr. Lynn is a certified Medical Review Officer and a fellow of the American Back Society. Dr. Lynn's special interests include preventative medicine and wellness.

How long has it been since you've reviewed proper lifting techniques and back care with your employees? Perhaps a review of these statistics will rekindle your interest in this subject:

- 8 out of 10 Adults will have back pain in their lifetime
- 85% will suffer recurrences
- 175 million working days are lost annually to chronic pain
- \$80 billion is estimated to be lost in work and productivity because of back pain

As staggering as these statistics are, why wait until a back injury occurs to take action? Preventing the injury is much easier and far less expensive than treating one.

The most common back problems are acute strains/sprains, muscle spasms, disc bulge, disc degeneration and disc herniation. Almost all back problems are the result of:

- Poor muscle tone which leads to loss of motor strength and flexibility
- Poor posture
- Poor body mechanics
- Excessive weight

On a positive note, most of these are correctable/controllable issues. While we cannot force our employees to adhere to a healthy diet, nor can we exercise for them, we can certainly encourage walking and/or stretching during scheduled breaks.

Something as simple as poor posture can lead to muscle fatigue and increase the chances for back/neck pain. A spine neutral position, where ear-shoulder-hip alignment is maintained, allows for the body's weight to be properly distributed on the bony skeleton, discs, and supporting structures. **POSTURE COUNTS!**



Proper body mechanics/lifting techniques can be taught and enforced until they are ingrained into the employee's work mentality. These are probably familiar to most of us, but bear refreshing:

- When given the option, push vs. pull an object, keeping the back straight and using the strong leg muscles.
- Use your legs, not your back, for lifting. Keep your seat low in order to avoid bending forward from the waist.



Wrong

Correct

- Think pivoting vs. twisting, allowing the feet to lead, in the direction your body is going.

- Centralize the object to be lifted, keeping it as close as possible in front of your waist. If you think of your lower spine as a fulcrum, then the farther away an object is from your body, the greater the force required to move it.



Wrong

Correct

- Think before you lift. Spend the first 5 minutes identifying how to make a lift more manageable. Can the size, shape or position of the object be changed, such as downsizing a 50-lb load into two 25-lb loads? Perhaps a mechanical device could be used, such as a rolling cart or hoist. Assess if an obstacle or trip hazard should be removed before proceeding with the lift.

No matter what the occupation, everyone can benefit from changing positions to relieve tired muscles. A simple reversal of the usual "forward bent" position, that is to extend your arms behind our backs, "pinching" the shoulder blades together; and slowly rotating your head so that your nose points to the numbers on an imaginary clock, first clockwise, then counter clockwise, can reduce the muscle tension and improve flexibility.

Back Assessment Survey Form

Potential employees are naturally reluctant to fully divulge anything which they believe could shed a negative light on their future employment. Therefore, if the questions are not asked up front, they may be overlooked, only to present as future work-related back or neck complaints.

OHG offers companies a more in-depth evaluation for back and neck assessment during pre-placement, post offer examination by utilizing a detailed history and targeted physical examination for the spine. This allows the physician to explore the proper placement of the candidate in the workplace.

If you would like to add the Back Assessment Survey to your current services, please contact:

Huntsville & Madison
Peaches Caudle
Phone (256) 922-6677
Fax (256) 922-6660
peachesc@hgala.org

Decatur
Dayton Gowen
Phone (256) 353-4325
Fax (256) 353-9639
daytong@hgala.org



DECATUR

1615 Kathy Lane
Decatur, AL 35603
Phone: (256) 353-4325
Fax: (256) 922-2531

HUNTSVILLE

1963 Memorial Parkway
Suite 24
Huntsville, AL 35801
Phone: (256) 265-7000
Fax: (256) 265-7007

MADISON

9238 Madison Boulevard
Building 1, Ste. 200
Madison, AL 35758
Phone: (256) 774-7300
Fax: (256) 922-2532

WELLNESS

6767 Old Madison Pike
Building 4, Ste. 400
Huntsville, AL 35806
Phone: (256) 922-6699
Fax: (256) 922-6660

“Special Evaluations” Luncheon Presentation given by Dr. James Gauthier, OHG’s Medical Director



Dr. James Gauthier, Medical Director of Occupational Health Group, delivered a presentation for the North Alabama Chapter of the National Safety Council entitled, “Special Evaluation: Independent Medical Exams, Fitness for Duty, and Return to Work Evaluations”. The presentation was given before a full crowd at the Greenbrier Restaurant.

The presentation was followed by an interesting question and answer period. The luncheon seminar was well received by the attendees and Dr. Gauthier looks forward to delivering more presentations in the future.



The February 20th presentation detailed the different types of examinations available to employers from Return-to-Work (RTW) through Independent Medical Evaluations (IME’s), and the advantages of using those evaluations for the protection of both the employer and the employee.

If you would like to have one of our physicians or Wellness Services staff present to one of your association meetings, please contact OHG’s Marketing Department at (256) 922-6677 for Huntsville and Madison and (256) 353-4325 for Decatur.

OHG Decatur Clinic Receives Top Ten Award for 2006

Occupational Health Group’s (OHG) Decatur clinic was recently chosen by Corporate Health Resources (CHR) as one of their “Top Ten Providers” for 2006, for their “courteous and professional staff”, “positive feedback from examinees to CHR”, and for providing “excellent service to CHR”. The clinic was chosen from CHR’s network of 7,400 providers throughout the United States and Canada, and will be posted on CHR’s website as one of their “Top Ten” providers for 2006. This is a wonderful recognition of the strong and skillful services that OHG strives to deliver consistently to all our clients, large or small.

OHG has been a provider of Occupational Medicine for 17 years, and is the only provider in North Alabama that focuses solely on occupational health. This award proves that the choice to devote our time and experience to occupational medicine has been rewarded. We congratulate our Decatur clinic for continuously doing an outstanding job as part of their daily routine.

Physician Spotlight: Freddy G. McMurry, M.D., M.P.H.



Dr. McMurry received his undergraduate degree from the University of North Alabama in 1981 and his medical degree from the University of Alabama School of Medicine in 1985. After medical school, he completed a three year residency in Internal Medicine at Erlanger Medical Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He practiced Emergency Medicine at Huntsville Hospital for eight years, where he was active on the medical staff, holding administrative positions in the Department of Emergency Medicine and serving on several hospital committees. In 1994, he received the Excellence in Teaching award from the Family Medicine Residents at the University of Alabama School of Medicine in Huntsville. In 1996, he received his Masters in Business Administration from the University of Alabama.

He completed the UAB Occupational Medicine Residency program in 1998 after serving as chief resident of the program. During his occupational medicine residency, he also earned a Masters in Public Health. He joined Occupational Health Group in Decatur in 1998, where he currently serves as Associate Medical Director.

Dr. McMurry has served on the Board of Directors for the Alabama Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians and on the Board of Directors of the Alabama Occupational and Environmental Medicine Association, where he is currently vice president of the organization. He is certified by the American Board of Independent Medical Examiners, a certified Medical Review Officer, and board certified in both Occupational Medicine and Internal Medicine.

OHG Directory

Administration.....	(256) 922-6675
Marketing and Business Development.....	(256) 922-6677
Billing Department.....	(256) 922-6673
OHG - Huntsville.....	(256) 265-7000
OHG - Madison.....	(256) 774-7300
OHG - Decatur.....	(256) 353-4325
Wellness Services.....	(256) 922-6699

www.OHGonline.org

Holiday Closings

All OHG clinics will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

Memorial Day	May 28th
July 4th	July 4th
Labor Day	September 3rd
Thanksgiving	November 22nd & 23rd
Christmas Day	December 24th & 25th



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