

Training Alone Does Not Work

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Studies show that group support is necessary to instill training.



What They Did

Researchers compared 120 companies that train employees in manual handling (lifting) with similar companies that do not train employees in manual handling.

What They Found

Companies that train their employees in manual handling had the same injury rates as the companies that did not do this training.

There were no differences in:

- sprains and strains
- back injuries
- soft-tissue injuries
- hernias.

Why?

Employees do not take what they learned in the class and apply it when they return to work.

Solution

Training only works when supervisors and coworkers encourage each other to apply the practices taught in the class.

Without this group support, nothing changes.



This Safety Minute was prepared by Larkin Communication (www.larkin.biz) in partnership with CEP. For more information, download the expanded PDF online at www.aiche.org/cep.



Talking Points and References

Discussion

Training alone didn't work. What did work?

When a fellow employee saw another employee lifting incorrectly, he or she stopped the employee and suggested trying it the way they learned in the training.

This employee-to-employee exchange works better to lower injury rates than training alone. The number of workplace injuries is more likely to decrease when employees take responsibility for one another.

Report's Conclusion

Researchers looked at 84 research projects on manual handling effectiveness and studied 120 organizations that require manual handling courses.

The report concluded that: "There is little evidence that manual handling training, focusing on handling techniques, is effective in promoting safer working practices and reducing manual handling injuries in the workplace."

Details About Manual Handling Courses

What Didn't Matter	Course Average
Length: It didn't matter if the course was short or long	Average course length was one half-day per year
Trainer: It didn't matter if the training was done by an in-house trainer or outside consultant	75% of companies used their own in-house trainers; 25% used outside consultants
Theoretical or Practical: It didn't matter if the training included hands-on practice or used only books or other imagery	Almost 99% of the courses included some practical exercises
Quality Ratings: It didn't matter if the course was highly rated by participants or poorly rated	Average quality, as rated by participants, was 55 out of 100; however, there was no association between rated quality and injury rates

Haslam, C., *et al.* "Manual Handling Training: Investigation of Current Practices and Development of Guidelines," Health and Safety Executive, <https://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrpdf/rr583.pdf> (2007).

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