

# **The measures of occupational health care to affect health promotion in construction**

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39% of Finnish construction workers had often or continuous symptoms in neck and shoulder region, 37% in back and 34% in upper extremities. Prevented occupational health care began in 1995, but the effects cannot be estimated due to the short period. Productivity and quality of work are affected by weak ergonomic and on the other hand work load of construction workers can be diminished with ergonomic work equipment. The objective of this study was to carry out methods for occupational health care professionals to promote health and work ability among construction workers and to assess the effects of learning skills and new work-lightened equipment and to evaluate the extent of the ergonomic consulting at small-scale enterprises in construction industry. In addition to that it was studied the amount of physical activity to promote health and work ability and the effect of early rehabilitation of construction workers' work ability. The study population was cleaners (N=50), construction workers (N=648).

The methods in the study were questionnaires of work ability, the amount of physical activity, symptoms of musculoskeletal symptoms, perceived health and work load. The OWAS method and heart rate monitoring were used to measure work load. The functional capacity of trunk muscles, the isometric and dynamic strength of upper and lower extremities, coordination and mobility and their maximal oxygen consumption were measured. Education in ergonomics was given in small-scale enterprises. Also training of new skills was given there together with consulting their work sites. Early rehabilitation consisted of physical activity training, and instructions, ergonomics, safety, mental and physical stress lessons.

The results indicate that there are available methods for occupational health care staff to promote health in construction industry. Work ability can be promoted by physical activity, by the use of ergonomic equipment in work and by ergonomic changes at workplaces. Small-scale enterprises in construction industry can promote health of their employees by planning and implementing programs together with occupational health care staff and by using ergonomic professionals in consulting and education.

## References

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