**Multi-Generational Workforce**

*Why do I need to address the multi-generational workforce at my company?*

* 1 out of 4 workers in the U.S. is in the "aging workforce" category (aged 55+). Overexertion, slips, trips, and falls cause 60% of lost-time work-related injuries in the U.S. and cost employers over $30 billion in direct workers' compensation costs in 2013.
* People are living and therefore working longer, unlike in past generations.
* Due to the shift in demographics in the workplace, a company its workers need to have a healthy and safe working environment.

Companies must understand how to utilize and protect older employees as more stay in the workforce. Protecting the aging workforce at your company doesn't have to be costly or time-consuming. This can be an opportunity to create a safe and mindful workforce that is healthy, engaged, and active.

*How do I address this?*

1. **Discuss and educate** – Ask open-ended questions to employees about how their work areas can be made safer, provide more comfort, and reduce physical strain.
2. **Limit physical demands** – Older workers are more susceptible to work-related injuries and are typically required to perform strenuous work. Good communication can facilitate employees to open up about any physical limitations. They may be able to provide ideas or resources on how to accommodate their needs or restrictions best. An excellent example of reducing physical strain is to automate workflow processes. You can also use a Job Safety Analysis (JSA) to help identify job-specific hazards and ways to mitigate these hazards.

[Job safety analysis template](https://www.compsourcemutual.com/resources/safety-library/job-safety-analysis-template/)

1. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Ensure proper PPE is used for the task. If necessary, re-evaluate the hazards and update PPE as needed. This could include replacing a trip hazard, such as an anti-fatigue mat, with personal anti-fatigue shoe insoles.

[Ergonomics program](https://www.compsourcemutual.com/resources/safety-library/ergonomics-program/)

[Ergonomics Self-assessment](https://www.compsourcemutual.com/resources/safety-library/ergonomics-self-assessment/)

1. **Calisthenics program** – Implement a daily stretching regimen as a part of their regular job duties. Increased flexibility can decrease musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). There are three primary body parts to focus on that will have the most significant impact on workers' ergonomic risk:
2. Hamstrings – having powerful leg muscles helps bear the brunt of lifting heavy objects. Without strong hamstrings, employees will typically lift with their backs which can put them at greater risk for injury.
3. Shoulders – workers can avoid injuries from reaching and pulling by having a more extensive range of shoulder rotation and flexibility.
4. Trunk – chronic lower back pain can be attributed to minimal or restricted trunk rotation. A more extensive range of motion in the trunk allows workers to bend and twist without injury.
5. **Accountability** – When everyone is on board with a safety and wellness program, it works well. To ensure employee engagement, the groundwork must be laid. Having others participate in the discussion can make older workers feel more confident discussing their limitations. Teamwork makes finding solutions more rewarding. Providing positive feedback, setting goals, and collaborating on solutions are all important.

*What if I need to limit the amount of direct exposure or physical strain on my aging workforce?*

* A mentorship role is an excellent fit for older workers because of their knowledge, skills, and experience. Using this method minimizes ergonomic exposure while supporting a productive and efficient work environment.
* Workers who are aging play an important role in the future of a business and are an asset to any organization. As a result of implementing these solutions, both older and younger workers can benefit and keep a productive and positive work environment.