Stay Strong as You Age

Safety Talk

Baby Boomers – those people born between 1946 and 1964 – make up about 25 percent of the workforce. And, as they age, their physical health will impact the businesses they work for, no matter how good they are at their jobs. Energy and physical strength are a concern, not only for the worker, but for the company who must accommodate them.

In this Safety Talk, we'll look at some of the issues workers face as they age and what they can do to stay focused and accident-free.

What Can Go Wrong

Most people have thought to themselves, "I'm just not as young as I used to be!" As we get older, our bodies start to slow down. However, we tend to make fewer mistakes than those who are younger than us. When we do get injured, though, our injuries are more severe. The severity of injury depends on some underlying health problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and osteoarthritis.

Some of the other issues we must contend with as we age are:

- Muscle loss
- Increased stiffness and reduced flexibility
- Hearing loss
- Vision changes
- Slower response time and corrective action

All of these issues can sap older workers of their energy and set them up for an injury.

How to Protect Yourself

Working out regularly can help anyone stay physically fit, but it’s particularly important as we age. Aging muscles result in loss of strength, which in turn can lead to injury, reduced sustained work time, and exhaustion.

To remain strong, focused and accident-free, older workers should:

- Get regular cardiovascular exercise to build endurance.
- Perform strength-building exercises to increase muscle mass.
- Play brain-training games to help stay mentally sharp.

In addition, they should practice safety at all times. To stay safe in the workplace, older workers should:

- Lift objects from waist level.
- Avoid repetitive tasks or staying in one position for too long.
- Avoid tasks that put a lot of pressure on the joints.
- Exercise at least 30 minutes every day.

Final Word

An aging workforce brings a lot to the table. Older workers’ wisdom, productivity, and experience are invaluable. However, they need to stay in shape to continue to overcome the problems their aging bodies present. Use the tips in this Safety Talk to stay fit and active as you age.