



## Your employees are like matches If you don't protect them your profits could go up in smoke!

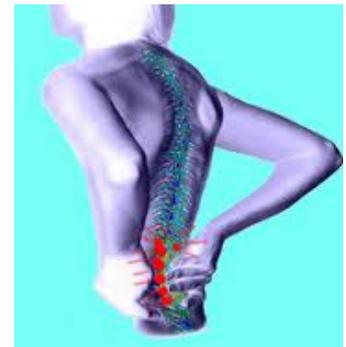
Musculoskeletal workplace injuries are costly in both financial and in human terms. In 2003 injuries related to patient handling cost ACC 30 million dollars and the hidden costs of injury to an organisation are estimated to be 4-6 times greater than the ACC compensation costs.

Since the introduction of Patient Handling Guidelines (PHG's) implementation has been variable. With an emphasis on one hour 'lifting sessions' without having an integrated system as recommended in the PHG's. Research shows teaching 'lifting' in isolation has had limited success in reducing injury rates (Hayne C, September 2005, Physiotherapy, Vol 1).

### Are you assessing the cost of an injury?

This is not a simple thing. ACC have a cost calculator on their website which may be useful.

An example they give is a nurse aide sustains a significant back injury (prolapsed disc in her lumbar spine) as she attempts to independently move a patient in bed. She has six weeks off work (potentially 13 weeks).



### Summary of the costs

	<b>Costs</b>
Incident costs	\$100
Investigation costs	\$365
Damage costs	0
Replacement costs	\$310
Productivity costs	\$8395
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9170</b>

If the nurse aide had been at work for the six weeks the wage bill would have come to **\$6,000** (including hourly rate, pro rated of all leaves, admin costs etc).

## Manual Handling injuries are high among health care workers.

Investing in manual handling training and equipment will benefit your organisation by:

<b>Reduced</b>	=	<b>Increased</b>
ACC Premiums/Claims		Productivity
Sick leave		Profits
Staff turnover		Staff retention

Most of all you get peace of mind knowing you comply with the OSH Code of Practice for Manual Handling.

### Take action today

Start by working through the “Are you ready checklist” (page 183-184) and “LITE staff questionnaire” (pages 186-188)

**ACC1342 NZ Patient Handling Guidelines (the Liten Up Approach)**, last updated 2005.

<http://www.acc.co.nz/search-results/index.htm?ssUserText=acc1342>

There is also a workspace audit (page 380) and risk assessment audit stating mobility plans should be visible (page 374). Reference:

**ACC Moving and Handling People: The New Zealand Guidelines 2012. Section 13.**

These will give you some idea of what is needed for your systems.

### Staff training

We would recommend adopting a ‘Train the Trainer’ approach where key staff are trained to deliver training and mentoring to staff on the floor. The system must allow for orientation and regular training update sessions to help maintain and up skill all staff.

### The environment

Identify and reduce hazards such as lack of space, inappropriate floor coverings, and equipment storage. (The PHG’s recommend equipment is stored within 20 metres of the working area.)

### Equipment

Resources for furniture and equipment, which encourages client independence and staff safety (the initial cost of purchasing equipment may be as little as 3% of an annual budget)

**Culture Change** - From 'learning to lift' to 'managing risk'.

Encourage staff to identify hazards, report injuries and near misses, participation in surveys, Health and Safety Meetings.

### **Health and Safety at Work Act 2016**

The new Act aims to reduce workplace injuries by 25% by 2020. It shifts the emphasis to action that reduces work place injury, rather than just identifying trivial hazards. It also supports worker engagement and participation.

By taking the first step, you'll know your employees are in safe hands – because like an unlit match, preventing work related injuries is far cheaper than see your profits go up in smoke.

***Call Therapy Professionals Ltd*** now on **03 377 5280** to discuss your Manual Handling needs. Our Manual Handling advisors and trainers to help with your Manual Handling issues.