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On the Technical Side... *musculoskeletal disorders*

Musculoskeletal disorders is a catch-all term for a number of different disorders and diagnoses... all of which have the common bond of being related to muscles involving muscular action or the lack of action including weakness and disability.

Musculoskeletal disorders can be divided into at least two different distinct groups based upon the nature of the disorder – those disorders related to repetitive or cumulative trauma, and those of a degenerative nature. The distinction between those becomes incredibly important when considering the work-related nature of the disorder, particularly where OSHA or Workers' Compensation is considered.

Well known musculoskeletal disorders related to cumulative trauma (also known as CTDs – cumulative trauma disorders) or repetitive motion (also known as RMS – repetitive motion syndrome) include carpal tunnel syndrome, thoracic outlet syndrome, tenosynovitis, tendonitis, lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow), medial epicondylitis, and others. Some diagnoses of sprain (pulled muscle) or strain (pulled tendon) may be considered cumulative in nature, but may also be related to singular events (such as lifting or twisting wrong). Individuals with those diagnoses may be eligible for funding for assistive devices through either workers' compensation insurance, or directly through their company for special accommodations to allow that individual to return to productive work.

Well known degenerative musculoskeletal disorders include multiple sclerosis (MS) and muscular dystrophy (MD) – other disorders also affecting muscles and/or muscle action include fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, post-polio, arthritis, lupus, and a host of other diseases. Individuals with those diagnoses may be eligible for assistive devices to return to work through their individual health insurance, or from their own company under the category of special needs or special accommodations through the Americans with Disabilities Act.

How do we respond and make recommendations for chairs related to those musculoskeletal disorders? We would be doing our customers (or potential customers) a tremendous disservice in shoehorning particular chairs for their particular syndrome. Unfortunately with human variability not everyone responds in the same way to exposure to repetitive motion - we all fight disease processes in different ways and differing timelines.

What we have to do is deal with each and every situation on a case by case basis – get as much detailed information as possible on the person's current status as well as their prognosis (what things look like for their functional capacity in the short and long term). Emphasize abilities – what the person can do – but tactfully confirm with them what they need help with, and what they are looking for the chair to do for them. The essential functions of their job – what they must be able to do to qualify for the job – must be performed... it's the secondary functions that become eligible for accommodations (i.e.

changes to make the job easier). Do what you can to help specify chair options to benefit them, but if you have questions, don't hesitate to ask for help from either your Regional Manager or Corporate Ergonomist.

Positioning and posture play an incredibly important role in musculoskeletal disorders – if someone is coming back from carpal tunnel syndrome surgery and they assume the same posture and actions that created the problem to begin with, then it's a matter of time before they begin to have the same symptoms again.

Our chairs have been given an FDA number for a reason – they qualify as therapeutic devices. That distinction gives us a heads up over our competition for the niche that we have enjoyed – that being special needs. It makes it easier for physicians to write a prescription for our chairs, whether the person has a workers' compensation claim or if the person is looking for reimbursement from their personal health insurance.

Of course we want to meet the needs of individuals with musculoskeletal disorders, but we also want to market our chairs with the eye to prevention... keeping workers from developing those repetitive motion disorders/cumulative trauma disorders and keeping their productivity as high as possible. Any company can benefit from the comfort, adjustability, and adaptability of BodyBilt chairs.