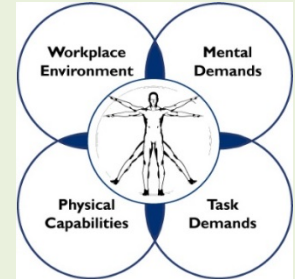


# What is the Ergonomics Climate Assessment Tool?

Colorado researchers recently found workplaces that value employees' safety and well-being as much as company productivity yield the greatest rewards.

Their study describes a new tool, the Ergonomics Climate Assessment<sup>1</sup>, which measures employee perception of their workplace's emphasis on the design and modification of work to maximize **both** employee performance and well-being.

Utilizing ergonomic principles can result in a "positive ergonomics climate" and can lead to reduced physical and mental strain, lowered risk of work-related injuries and illnesses, and an improvement in work quality and efficiency. The researchers identified 40 questions that represented four indicators of ergonomics climate:



- management commitment
- employee involvement
- job hazard analysis
- training and knowledge

With this information, they studied an organization's Ergonomic Climate and its relationship to employees' self-reported work-related musculoskeletal pain.

They found that when an organization promoted productivity and employee well-being equally to their workers, employees reported having less work-related musculoskeletal pain. However, when workers perceived an emphasis on either performance or well-being **unequally**, workers reported greater levels of work-related musculoskeletal pain. The researchers hypothesized that one potential mechanism for this relationship could be work-related stress. If performance is perceived to be more important, the worker may feel stress over getting the job done regardless of their health. Or, if well-being is perceived to be more important, the worker may feel that ergonomic improvements to their job will harm their productivity. A "balanced" system where performance and well-being are valued equally reduces competing demands resulting in less stress and strain.

This study adds new evidence that using tools such as ergonomics to increase employees' well-being in the workplace benefits not only the employee, but business performance as well.

*Excerpted from the NIOSH Science Blog, August 7, 2015. <http://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2015/08/07/ergo-climate/>*

<sup>1</sup>Ergonomics Climate Assessment: A measure of operational performance and employee well-being. Krista Hoffmeister<sup>1</sup>, Alyssa Gibbons, Natalie Schwatka, John Rosecrance. 50:160-69, September 2015.