

## **Physical Fitness affects Job Performance**

This introduction from the American College of Sports Medicine will explain why fitness is important even if you are not in a physical demanding job such as a firefighter or police officer. Being physical fit allows us to do our jobs more efficiently and with less absenteeism.

### **Occupational Benefits from Physical Training**

As athletes strive to improve their performance through effective training techniques, so too can workers benefit from optimally planned exercise training programs designed to boost occupational physical performance. Similar to athletics, where skill and fitness demands vary between that of the recreational and the professional athlete-occupational physical demands can vary among employment settings.

Physically demanding occupations, such as those found in the armed services, emergency rescue professions, and construction and warehouse industries, require a high degree of physical fitness. Job performance in these occupations can be supplemented by participation in formal exercise programs targeted at improving the musculoskeletal and cardiorespiratory systems.

Even less physically demanding occupations such as computer or clerical work can benefit from fitness and flexibility training. Tasks involving prolonged and repetitive pushing and pulling, holding, carrying, and lifting can lead to cumulative trauma disorders such as lower back pain, sprains, strains, carpal tunnel syndrome and neck pain.

Physical training can be effectively used as both a prevention and rehabilitation tool in occupational settings. In addition to the well-known health benefits of being physically fit, physical training interventions can increase worker productivity by overcoming limitations in job performance due to inadequate muscle strength, power, endurance or aerobic capacity. Physical training can also prevent mismatches between job demands and physical capacities and decrease lost time due to injury-related absenteeism.