

The WorkSTEPS[®] Model

Statistics prove that the best way to treat any injury or illness is to prevent it from ever occurring. However, there are many debates about what interventions are the most effective and which ones achieve the highest measures of success. It has been my experience as a recognized expert in the field of occupational and industrial medicine, that the single highest degree of injury reductions are accomplished through functional testing. Functional testing is a bio-ergonomic intervention that measures human strength and performance, and appropriately matches them to the physical demands of the job. The WorkSTEPS Functional Test Model (“Model”) has proven to reduce work-related MSDs by an average of 50% in its first year of implementation when used as a first line of defense in the prevention of MSDs. Functional testing combined with other injury management programming such as conditioning, ergonomics, etc., can help achieve reductions which are even more significant.

This WorkSTEPS Model (“Model”) was developed in clinical setting, by occupational clinicians over 15 years ago. It was founded to meet a critical need – to create a medically safe, legally compliant, scientific and objective means of matching a worker’s functional capabilities with the essential functions of the job. It was developed as a tool that employers could use to help insure that a worker was safely and appropriately matched to the physical demands of the job.

The Model establishes safety as a mission with shared responsibility between employers, employees, and the health care clinician consulting them. It also supplies a system of checks and balances that measures accountability for all parties concerning their respective roles.

The Model is being provided to employers through a national network of occupational health care clinicians (doctors, physical therapists, and occupational therapists). These clinicians provide employers with one the most comprehensive, state-of-the-art, and legally compliant functional testing models available. Licensed clinicians perform the protocols, procedures and processes outlined in the Model in a clinical or on-site setting. These clinicians and their aides receive annual training and refresher course work on proper protocols, and procedures as well as updates on changes in regulations and compliance factors.

The Model has gained wide acceptance in the business community due to the rising costs associated with workers’ compensation and increased federal regulations being imposed on employers by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The Model helps employers stay compliant with federal hiring practices and the Americans’ With Disabilities Act. The Model utilizes appropriately designed and administered tests, historical pre- and post-injury data, and evaluations relevant to physical performance to help mitigate the incidence and costs of injury and provide better data to its employers to assist in resolution of claims.

The Model is currently utilized in 35 states and has proven invaluable to both large and small employers in their ongoing efforts to reduce workplace injury incidence and their related costs. This Model is appropriate for use in all industries as it addresses common musculoskeletal problems that encompass heavy labor to high tech, repetitive motion injuries. Many employers using the Model have been recognized both nationally and regionally for exemplary accomplishments in safety and prevention programming. The employer/occupational medicine partnership created through this Model has resulted in hundreds of safer, more productive workplaces.

The Model is affordable, and viewed by most employers as an investment as opposed to an expense. The entire process can be accomplished for less than 1,000 dollars per job and an investment of 150 dollars per year per employee not including expenses related to injuries. A recent study conducted for one of our national clients by a national, independent injury management consulting group calculated that the employer saved \$30.00 for every \$1.00 invested in functional testing. To date that employer has spent approximately \$1,000,000 on testing and the return on investment was calculated at \$30,000,000.

The Model has been refined, computerized, and studied for over ten years. It is valid and reproducible (publication pending). Employers using this Model have experienced tremendous success in reducing MSDs and their related costs. Although it does not completely alleviate MSDs they are reduced an average of 50% during the first year's implementation, with an average reduction of 75% by the end of year 3.

Employers who utilized the Model in conjunction with other injury management programming and ergonomic technologies are achieving reductions of up to 75% during first year's implementation, with some having achieved reductions of as high as 89%.

In addition to reducing new injuries and their related costs, employers are experiencing reduced modifier rates, reductions in lost time, increased worker productivity, decreased turnover, and diminished incidences of fraud and abuse.

The Model establishes functional testing as the foundation for hiring, health maintenance, rehabilitation, and return-to-work programming. The Model provides employers with guidance, information and protocols on how to incorporate functional testing into their existing policies and procedures. It also provides guidance on how to educate employees about its values and benefits.

The Model is comprehensive in nature and combines an ergonomic, a functional, and a medical model. Medical and functional (job specific) tests are based upon actual job demands and the common medical complaints associated with the position in question. Tests include pre and post offer tests for new hires, fit for duty tests for existing workers, upper extremity and carpal tunnel testing for jobs requiring hand repetitive motion and functional capacity evaluations for employees who have been injured on the job. Baseline health information collected in the pre and post offer test is invaluable to both employers and employees in the maintenance, treatment, and return-to-work of employees.

The Model is currently utilized by approximately one thousand companies spanning 36 states with a national fail rate of 7-12%. The Model has been established since 1986 and conforms fully to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines for application in regard to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and provides ongoing legal support to clinicians and employers utilizing the Model.

CONCLUSION:

Since its inception, this Model has significantly prevented and reduced workplace injuries and has effectively and safely been utilized to return injured workers to gainful employment in a timely manner. There is no greater benefit to safety than individualized assessment of work capability for new hires, periodic evaluation for existing workers', and post injury testing. By combining the ergonomic model with a functional and a medical model, the ability to accommodate, effectively treat, create accountability and base decisions on objective information are significantly enhanced.

Our history proves that injuries are reduced by 50% the first year and 75% by three years of implementation. If a company utilizes this Model or any other available method to accomplish such success, the proposed Ergonomic Standard should allow an exemption for that employer. Such a system would motivate employers to seek out successful interventions to eliminate every musculoskeletal injury and reserve enforcement to those employers who did not attempt or were unsuccessful in doing so. Finally this Model allows for a scientific method of checks and balances that creates accountability for the employee, the employer, the ergonomist, and the healthcare professional to eliminate abuse and be equally fair to all parties concerned.

COMPONENTS OF THE MODEL

THE MODEL INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

A CONTENT VALID JOB ANALYSIS LIBRARY.

- On site evaluation or experience with each job position
- Recommendations for modifications/limits
- Third party interviews with workers and supervisors
- Pictures/video for training about body mechanics, awkward postures, etc.
- Current transition of job data to internet file

INTERDISCIPLINARY SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

- Complete on-site job analysis (ergonomic, safety, haz-mat)
- Qualification standards for medical providers who must understand the entire process of work injury management

ONE OF THE LARGEST STANDARDIZED FUNCTIONAL EMPLOYMENT TEST SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

AMERICAN'S WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) COMPLIANT

LEGAL SPECIALIZATION IN EEOC CASE REVIEW AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

SIX COMPREHENSIVE TESTS WITH STANDARDIZED DATA COLLECTION AND SAME DAY INTERNET REPORTING TO EMPLOYERS.

- Pre-offer agility
- Post-offer basic
- Post-offer comprehensive
- Fit-for-duty
- Functional Capacity Evaluation (Post Injury)
- Carpal Tunnel Testing

SAFETY, PREVENTION, AND WELLNESS PROGRAMMING AND TRAINING

ERGONOMIC CONSULTING AND SERVICES

ONGOING CLINICAL AND LEGAL SUPPORT TO HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND EMPLOYERS

- CONTINUING EDUCATION IN COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION AND WORK INJURY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMING

**TESTIMONALS AND FIRST YEAR INJURY REDUCTION
STATISTICS FOR NATIONAL, REGIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL
EMPLOYERS UTILIZING THE WorkSTEPS® FUNCTIONAL
EMPLOYMENT TESTING PROGRAM**

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	SIZE OF INDUSTRY AND SIC CODE	TESTIMONIAL	ESTIMATED % OF INJURY REDUCTION DURING FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION
Construction – Heavy Construction Except Building	National / 16	<p>“What an amazing turn-around! We implemented WorkSTEPS in 1997; we experienced a 79% reduction in recordable injuries our first year. Our present OSHA recordable incident rate remains below 1.0, while the national BLS average for construction is 9.0. We’ve assessed approximately 8,200 employee in a 28 month period. We experienced 30 soft tissue claims/complaints through February of 1997; 0 in the last 10 months of 1997. We have been recognized both regionally and nationally for our safety programming. I whole-heartedly recommend the WorkSTEPS Program to other employers.”</p>	79%
Manufacturer – Office Furniture And Fixtures	National / 252	<p>“Our company adopted the WorkSTEPS process in April of 1998. As of October of 1999, 1,049 applicants have been tested. 99 have failed the process. The fail rate was 9.4% while the WorkSTEPS average is around 12%. The first facility we implemented testing in saw a reduction in recordables of 36% in the first year. Our company is confident in the value of WorkSTEPS in Accident Reduction.</p>	36%
Mining – Oil and Gas Extraction – Offshore Drilling	International / 13	<p>“We began using WorkSTEPS two years ago to help reduce work injuries. I am happy to report that we reduced our claims by 33% in the first year. We are identifying better, qualified employees, reducing turnover, and returning our workers back to work weeks ahead of traditional care.”</p>	33%

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	SIZE OF INDUSTRY AND SIC CODE	TESTIMONIAL	ESTIMATED % OF INJURY REDUCTION
Transportation -Transportation / Warehouse	National /142	"I am astonished at the success we've had at reducing our workers' compensation costs. I personally feel that WorkSTEPS has had a significant impact on this success by effectively assessing those who may not be qualified to perform the essential functions of the job. WorkSTEPS was implemented near the end of 1998. We experienced a 70% reduction in the severity of our claims and a 40% reduction in the frequency of our claims."	40%
Mining - Oil and Gas Extraction- Well Servicing Company	State / 138	"Back injuries went from 46 per year to 5 per year in a two year period, while injury expenses decreased 84% the first year we implemented the WorkSTEPS Program. Another interesting benefit was that employee turnover was down 43% even though man hours worked was approximately the same. We have seen a tremendous benefit in the prevention of injuries, the safety of our existing workforce and the responsibility of our injured employees to return to work sooner. Please pass on our appreciation to your staff."	67.4% (back injuries only)
Manufacturer – Motor Vehicle Parts & Accessories	Regional / 3714	"Please let this letter serve as my highest recommendation and compliments to you and your staff regarding the pre-employment screening, fitness for duty testing, and physical therapy received by our employees in 1997. Our workers perform many repetitive duties such as sewing and parts assembly therefore we see a lot of carpal tunnel and back injuries. In 1996, we experienced 140 claims and in 1997 only 96 claims for a reduction of 31%. Please congratulate your staff on a job well done and feel free to use our firm as a reference."	31%

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	SIZE OF INDUSTRY AND SIC CODE	TESTIMONIAL	ESTIMATED % OF INJURY REDUCTION
Health Services - Nursing Homes	State / 805	<p>“I accepted a position in Houston, Texas, as a risk manager for the largest privately owned chain of nursing homes and retirement center in Texas. I became aware of your program through a WorkSTEPS representative in Beaumont, where we had two facilities. Let me say that the examinations performed by your representatives identified the fact that two of every three workers we had selected as potential employees were not able to perform the physical requirements such work would entail. The program also helped limit our liability for future injuries for those individuals with pre-existing (but unidentified) conditions. I conservatively estimate that the testing performed by your company resulted in a stop loss of over \$250,000 annually from work-related injuries and resulting personnel actions.</p>	67%
Manufacturing -Ship Building	State / 373	<p>“We have won our industry’s “Excellence In Safety” Award for five years in a row designating our shipyards as the safest in the United States. We implemented WorkSTEPS to further our safety effort. Employees who are matched to the essential functions of their jobs perform safer and are more productive. Our industry’s turnover rate is 50%. Ours is 16%. The enhanced medical history collected during a WorkSTEPS’ Test provides us with the information we need to properly protect the safety and health of our people. After eighteen months of review we found that those employees who were tested; a.) were 25% less likely to have back injuries, and b.) Of those who did sustain a back injury, the severity of the injury was less and the cost of the claims were 43% lower than employees who were not tested.</p>	37% (back injuries only)

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	SIZE OF INDUSTRY AND SIC CODE	TESTIMONIAL	ESTIMATED % OF INJURY REDUCTION
Health Services –Hospital	State / 806	<p>“Success was, and currently is, measured in dollars saved and injuries reduced. An effectiveness study of three 9 month periods was completed in August 1999. It looked at the 9 month period following their post-offer pre-employment testing program, the 9-months prior to the testing and the same 9 month period of the previous year. The study concluded that there was a 64% reduction in new claims filed in the 9 month period following the post-offer pre-employment testing program. We found the incidence of low back claims dropped by 66%. Finally, the percent of change from new claims since the post-offer pre-employment testing program was implemented resulted in savings to the hospital of \$205,656. Of that figure, \$90,883 was represented in low back claims.</p>	63%
Manufacturer – Plastic Materials & Resin	National / 3089	<p>“We reviewed detail claims information for two periods: a.) the period of 7/1/94-6/30/95, the period immediately preceding the implementation of WorkSTEPS, and the period of 7/1/95-6/30/95, the period in which WorkSTEPS was implemented. Based on the analysis, we concluded the following: a.) average cost per claims went from \$5,290 to \$3,058 b.) we experienced a 44% reduction in injuries, c.) we realized a gross savings of \$253,294 in cost of total injury claims.</p>	44%

**The statistics reported in this study were provided by risk, human resource, and safety professionals employed by the reporting industry, not WorkSTEPS representatives.*

**The reporting industries averages are based on a minimum of 500 to a maximum of 10,000 tests.*

**The average reduction in injury statistic is based on first year implementation. Second and third year average reductions range from 10% to 20%.*

WorkSTEPS does not promote its product based on name recognition of the clients we serve. WorkSTEPS represents that all statistics and testimonials utilized in this study are on file at the WorkSTEPS Corporate Office located in Las Colinas, TX. Should you desire to speak with a representative from an industry utilizing the WorkSTEPS Program, please contact WorkSTEPS at 800-549-4502 and we'll be glad to put you in touch with an industry representative who has given us permission to utilize them as a reference.

TESTIMONIALS OF EMPLOYERS WHO HAVE BENEFITED FROM THE WorkSTEPS® PROGRAM

TYPE OF INDUSTRY / SIC CODE	EMPLOYER TESTIMONIAL	BENEFIT FROM WorkSTEPS®
Mining (Oil & Gas Extraction) / SIC – 138	<p>“We had a contractor who had an employee injured on one of our well sites. He was suing both companies for 1.2 million dollars for a knee injury that required several surgeries and kept him off work over 2 years. Data collected during a WorkSTEPS screen documented a pre-existing problem that decreased our liability and resulted in a settlement of only \$22,000.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Data collected during a WorkSTEPS screen documented pre-existing problem that decreased our liability and resulted in a settlement of only \$22,000.”
Health Services (Hospital) / SIC – 80	<p>“I am writing to express my satisfaction with the WorkSTEPS post-offer screening tool and the support we receive from your organization. WorkSTEPS stands head and shoulders above comparable products when compared in terms of ease of staff training and use, consistency, and reproducibility. I would endorse and recommend your company to others.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction with the post-offer testing and the support received from WorkSTEPS. • Ease of staff training and use, consistency and reproducibility of the WorkSTEPS Program.
Manufacturing (Tire Manufacturer) / SIC – 301	<p>“I want to thank you and let you know what a positive impact you and WorkSTEPS are having on our associates. We can truly say that our people know more about lifting techniques and body mechanics than all the safety videos have taught them rolled together. We’ve also been saved a workers’ comp case as a result of the deteriorating knee you discovered. That associate has had surgery and is back at work, grateful for the freedom from pain. The evaluations are helping doctors return people to the right work.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive impact on associates and increased knowledge about lifting techniques and body mechanics. • Identified a pre-existing condition, saving the employer a workers’ comp case. • Matching employees to suitable job tasks.

TYPE OF INDUSTRY / SIC CODE	EMPLOYER TESTIMONIAL	BENEFIT FROM WorkSTEPS®
Transportation & Public Utilities (Trucking & Warehouse) / SIC – 42	<p>“We gladly and highly recommend WorkSTEPS...We began utilizing the program in June, 1990, and immediately saw a reduction in on-the-job injury claims. Because of the trust and open communication developed with OPT, we insist they supervise and monitor the results of each WorkSTEPS evaluation. Though we encounter high employment turnover, we find that the benefit is a remarkable investment toward decreasing future losses due to injury.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saw immediate reduction in on-the-job injury claims • Developed trust and communication with WorkSTEPS provider. • Find the program as a remarkable investment toward decreasing future losses due to injury.
Transportation & Public Utilities (Trucking & Warehouse) / SIC – 42	<p>“The program itself, along with your very talented and professional staff, have greatly reduced the risk of us hiring ‘future injuries’ and helped us employ people who we are reasonably sure can handle the workload, physically. We have yet to have an injury to an employee who was screened through the WorkSTEPS program and have had only two lost time accidents in the past 1,100-plus days. There is no question in my mind that the program provides an employer with a tool which did not exist previously and is certainly the key to reducing work related accidents in the future.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced risk of hiring “future injuries” • Qualifies employees to their physical capabilities as it relates to job specific tasks • No injuries reported on employees who had the evaluation • Key to reducing work related accidents
Mining (Oil & Gas Extraction / Drilling) / SIC – 13	<p>“In comparing 1st quarter statistics for the company, there is a noticeable drop in dollar amounts associated with accidents. Additionally, the severity of accidents has been drastically reduced since using your service. The number of lost time accidents, both actual and alleged, appear to have been virtually eliminated. We would like to emphasize the following points as benefits derived from your program: Hiring practices are improved, in that physically non-qualified applicants are identified immediately. Newly hired employees have a more accurate picture of physical demands of the job prior to rig assignment. The base measure of abilities and follow-ups provide a deterrent to fraudulent workman’s compensation claims. Our initial opinion is that use of your service has resulted in significant savings to our operation”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant savings • Lost time accidents virtually eliminated • Hiring practices improved • New employees see the physical demands of the job • Deterrent to fraudulent workers’ comp claims

TYPE OF INDUSTRY / SIC CODE	EMPLOYER TESTIMONIAL	BENEFIT FROM WorkSTEPS®
Services (Hotels & Other Lodging Places) / SIC – 70	<p>“Having participated in the WorkSTEPS Post Offer Physical Examination and Evaluation for six months, I can honestly say I am pleased with the results. We have used the program to test potential employees for the housekeeping, kitchen, maintenance, banquets and bell staff to determine if they possess sufficient strength and flexibility to perform the demands of the job as specified in ADA specified Job Descriptions. Having witnessed several of my employees submit to the examination, I can testify to it’s thoroughness and validity. There is no doubt in my mind that our work related injuries have and will continue to diminish as a result of participating in the WorkSTEPS Program.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test is thorough and valid • Reduction in work related injuries
Manufacturing (Chemical) / SIC – 2821	<p>“As an integral part of our work site’s health and safety program, WorkSTEPS has improved our placement process and added a higher dimension of safety and employee retention.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved hiring process • Added a higher dimension of safety
Wholesale Trade-Non-Durable Goods SIC – 5181 / 5148	<p>“This letter is to say thanks for the services you provide for us. The response that you give to our needs regarding pre-employment screening, drug testing, post-injury therapy, and physician contact is prompt and effective. Your staff is always courteous and thorough when dealing with our particular medical formats and questions. I especially appreciate the manner in which you have helped other WorkSTEPS units throughout the five-state area of our business operations to start us as a new client for employment/medical needs in those areas. The WorkSTEPS appraisal has provided us with assurance that employee candidates are capable of performing the physical intensive functions of our heavy labor jobs. As always, thanks to you and your staff for ‘taking care of us’.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courteous and thorough staff • Accommodating employer’s policies and procedures for hiring and medical needs • Availability and accommodation for facilities throughout a five-state region • Assures that employees are capable of performing heavy labor job functions

TYPE OF INDUSTRY / SIC CODE	EMPLOYER TESTIMONIAL	BENEFIT FROM WorkSTEPS®
Manufacturing (Metal) / SIC – 339	<p>“I am writing to let you know how pleased I am with your WorkSTEPS Program. Now, all my employees know why they are being tested when they come to work and they realize that it is very difficult to fake an injury, since we have documentation to verify their pre-employment physical abilities. Consequently, I believe the psychology of the testing has had as much to do with the reason we have had no claims since we began the WorkSTEPS Program as the screening itself. I highly recommend this program for every business. Without a doubt it will help keep workers’ compensation premiums as low as possible.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents fraudulent claims • Reduces workers’ compensation premiums
Municipality	<p>“WorkSTEPS Program has saved our municipality untold amounts of money and training. With ever increasing requirements being placed on the employer, FLSA, ADA and other federal mandated regulations your job analysis program has filled the spot. Our employees know the proper techniques for lifting, turning, etc., therefore reducing the risk of injuries and lost man-hours.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with Federal Regulations • Reduction in lost-time work injuries.
Manufacturing / SIC – 3731	<p>“The WorkSTEPS job analysis program has been a helpful tool in maintaining employee focus on a ‘safer’ work environment. Employees were pleased to be involved in brainstorming sessions on safer ways of accomplishing day-to-day tasks. The employee evaluations set perimeters for each employee to work within their own physical limits.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps maintain focus safety in the workplace. • Camaraderie with employees • Qualified employees’ physical abilities
Financial Institution / Professional Code – 602	<p>“I am writing this letter to let you know how much I appreciated your help and concern when I visited your clinic several weeks ago for symptoms of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. I was embarrassed to find out that bad posture was the cause for my discomfort, but I was relieved that I did not have Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. I am using the exercises that you gave me three times a day and they are helping tremendously.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WorkSTEPS Carpal Tunnel Evaluation helped with proper diagnosis
Retail Trade (Building Materials & Garden Supplies) / SIC – 52	<p>“Our on-the-job injuries have been reduced by about 40% and we believe it is because we do not place people in positions where they can’t perform the physical demands of the job.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifies employees to their physical capabilities as it relates to a particular job description