

### The Oregon Governor's Occupational Safety and Health Conference Dr. Danny R. Mielke **Eastern Oregon University** Physical Activity and Health

### Participant Expectations

- Identify ways to improve and maintain health as you age; including exercise, diet, and stress reduction
- Develop strategies to make the workplace a healthier environment for workers as they move toward the end of their careers and retirement.
- Prepare to implement a program and report back about the effectiveness of your efforts

### Older Worker Health Practices

- 10,000 new 55+ year olds each day
- Do our systems and facilities accommodate aging workers?
- Many older workers face a number of physical, sensory, and mental challenges in performing their work tasks.
- Older workers bring a strong work ethic and a wealth of knowledge and experience. They are the most skilled and productive employees.

### Older Worker Health Practices

- Consume relatively high wages and benefits
- Health care utilization for chronic disease is high
- Reduced muscular strength, endurance, hearing, memory and reflexes might adversely affect their safety, health and performance

### Older Worker Health Practices

- Older workers actually experience lower injury rates then younger workers due to the fact that they have higher skill levels, experience, and mature judgment
- If injured, older workers lose more work time and utilize more health care then younger workers.

# What can employers do? Change the work environment Design jobs to reduce heavy lifting Mechanical for manual strength; reduce repetitive tasks; allow adequate recovery time Provide increased lighting levels Workplace ergonomics Reduce physically stressful postures

## What can employers do? Alter work arrangements and work-life balance Telecommuting Job sharing Phased retirement 3 out of 4 workers said they would prefer reduced hours gradually rather then abrupt retirement Mentoring programs

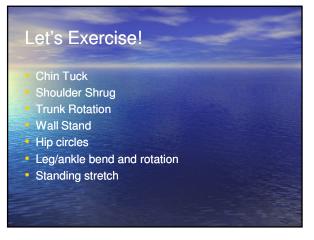
### What can employers do? Promote health Incentives for disease prevention practices Reduced health care insurance cost for practicing healthy behaviors Provide health screenings at the workplace Immunizations, blood pressure screening, smoking cessation Promote healthy behaviors Provide onsite exercise programs, work time release for health promotion programs (diet counseling, stress reduction classes).





# What can employees do? Practice health promoting behaviors Learn about and prepare healthy meals; low in fat, low in high fructose corn syrup products; lower portion sizes; Eat whole grains, fruits and vegetables as a basis for your diet. Countries with the longest living population eat a diet rich in these foods

### What can employees do? Practice health promoting behaviors Exercise regularly Do 15 to 30 minutes of aerobic exercise on most days Improve your flexibility through stretching exercises or activities such as yoga Increase muscular strength by engaging in strength building activities (weight training, physical work) When appropriate - walk instead of drive; climb stairs instead of using the elevator; leave your desk hourly and walk for a few minutes



### Fit Employees Set and achieve goals Less likely to get sick Tend to have better Have more energy attitudes Have more self- Less stressed confidence Excellent team Inspires greater selfbuilding opportunities confidence Feel the employers Tend to take on more have more concern leadership roles for them







### Older workers are both willing and able to learn new tasks and skills - they are generally better educated then previous generations. They are receptive to using new technologies if they perceive the technology as useful, easy to use, and receive adequate training and support.









