



The Ergonomics of Ergonomics: Have We Missed the Obvious?

Ergonomics is a scientific discipline and associated professional practice with roots in a number of domains including engineering, psychology and medicine. Like some other professional practices, there is an informal relationship between researchers and practitioners of Ergonomics, with practitioners deciding on a somewhat individual basis or with influence from other practitioners what types of analysis techniques to use when analyzing work. Manual materials handling research and practice in a variety of industry sectors from warehousing to mining will be used to illustrate the potential interplay between ergonomics research and practice. Little formal study has investigated how this interplay does or does not occur, with more emphasis on encouraging the translation of research to practice. Suggestions for strengthening the practice and ultimate impact of ergonomics through a better understanding of the needs of and constraints on those applying ergonomics, closing an open loop, will be provided. Ergonomics audits developed for mining operations will be used to illustrate how considering the end users' preferences and requirements can result in more effective ergonomics tools.



ABOUT PATRICK G. DEMPSEY, PH.D., CPE

After 11 years in various roles at the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety, Patrick G. Dempsey joined the Office of Mine Safety & Health of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in December 2007. He is currently Acting Branch Chief of the Workplace Health Branch of the Pittsburgh Mining Research Division. He has a B.S. degree in Industrial Engineering from the State University of New York at Buffalo, and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Industrial Engineering from The Texas Tech University. He is a Fellow of the Ergonomics Society (UK) and a Certified Professional Ergonomist. His research interests have centered around applying ergonomics and safety in demanding occupational environments with particular emphasis on preventing low-back and upper-extremity musculoskeletal disorders.