



Welcome Tracey McIntosh

Work-Able Solutions is pleased and excited to welcome Tracey McIntosh to our team!

Tracey has over 13 years of experience as an Occupational Therapist in the field of vocational rehabilitation. She has provided a variety of assessment, rehabilitation, and consultative services in the private sector for employers/industry, the Workers' Compensation Board, auto and long term disability insurance providers, and private health care insurance in British Columbia, Alberta, and most recently in Manitoba.

Tracey has extensive experience in functional capacity evaluation. She is a *Certified*

Work Capacity Evaluator with training and certification in Isernhagen, Arcon, Matheson, and Blankenship protocols.



Tracey has completed the Roy Matheson & Associates *Applied Ergonomics Professional Residency Program* and was a registered service provider for both the WCB of B.C. and Alberta *Activity-Related Soft Tissue Disor-*

der Programs.

Tracey has expertise in case coordination, office/computer ergonomics, soft tissue and repetitive strain injuries, work/functional capacity evaluations, job site assessments, job demands analysis, work site modifications/ accommodations, functional/home assessments, and return to work programs. Tracey also has extensive experience conducting assessments and interventions with heavy equipment operators and truck drivers.

Tracey is registered with the College of Occupational Therapists of Manitoba, and is a member of the Canadian Occupational Therapy Association.

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Service Description: Progressive Goal Attainment Program (PGAP)

The *Progressive Goal Attainment Program (PGAP)* is designed to minimize disability in individuals with persistent or chronic pain conditions. PGAP is suitable for clients who are suffering from a persistent pain condition, and for whom pain symptoms and psychosocial factors are significant barriers to rehabilitation progress.

Activity as the Key to Rehabilitation Success: The primary aim of the PGAP is to

maximize activity involvement in spite of pain. For individuals with persistent pain, activity avoidance can lead to deconditioning, lower tolerance for physical activity, increased disability and ultimately, reduced quality of life. Recent research has supported the view that return to activity is critical to the success of rehabilitation for individuals with persistent pain conditions.

Unfortunately, simply recommending an increase in activity

has not been effective in reducing the degree of disability associated with pain. It has become clear that increasing activity involves a complex interplay among many factors including the individual's physical symptoms, lifestyle, environment, perceptions and beliefs, and his or her confidence in the ability to overcome these difficulties. Psychosocial factors are currently considered to be the most significant determinants of disability associated with pain.

These factors are targeted during the PGAP program.

This **10-week** program is available at Work-Able Solutions and includes: weekly sessions with the occupational therapist; structured homework assignments completed by the client, initial, mid-treatment and final assessments, and initial, progress, and termination reports.

October is National Occupational Therapy Month



Occupational therapists help people to attain their potential in their desired occupations of daily living.

In honour of national OT month: we thought it would be a good time to present a few facts about Occupational Therapy:

An occupational therapist (OT) works with anyone who is having difficulty doing the activities that are important to them. OT's define occupation as everything that a person does each day, within each of the following categories:

- self-care (getting dressed, bathing, cooking and eating).
- productivity (paid or unpaid work, housework and school).
- leisure (hobbies, sports, social activities).



Occupational therapists work with people of all ages, and with a variety of limitations. Occupational therapists are university-trained, regulated health professionals whose unique training enables them to understand not only the medical and physical limitations of a disability or injury, but also the psycho-social factors that impact on an individual's ability to participate in daily activities. An OT also understand the impact of environmental, social, and cultural issues that affect an individual. Occupational therapists help people to

attain their potential in their desired occupations of daily living.

Qualified occupational therapists have:

- Graduated from an accredited university program with a four year baccalaureate degree or a master's degree in occupational therapy.
- Successfully completed a minimum of 1000 hours of fieldwork education.
- Successfully passed the certification examination administered by the CAOT, or met provincial registration qualifications.

Occupational therapists are experts, recognized by government and consumers for evaluating and promoting performance in daily occupations that include work, school, self-care and leisure pursuits.

Focus On: Ergonomics for Laptop Users

Written By: Elaine Huzel, Occupational Therapist

Laptop users often end up working in places that make the average cubicle seem like ergonomic heaven.

There is a lot of information available regarding office or computer ergonomics. Yet many people who use laptop computers still struggle with how to work comfortably.

Unfortunately, there is no ergonomically correct way to use a laptop for long periods! If you place the laptop on a desk to better view the screen: you sacrifice the comfort of your arms

and upper back. If you place the laptop on your lap, you will have comfortable shoulders and arms, and a sore neck.

Trackpads and other integrated pointing devices compound the problem by requiring that designers position the keyboard away from the laptop's edge, making the keys hard to reach without resting on the surface of the laptop. And if you're not

careful, the sharp edge on the front of certain models can put even more pressure on the nerves, blood vessels, and tendons in your wrists.

Beyond these fundamental design flaws, the simple fact that laptops are portable can exacerbate their ergonomic hazards. Thanks to improved batteries and Wi-Fi connectivity, road warriors often end



working in places that make the average cubicle seem like ergonomic heaven.

Desktop Replacement

Since monitors are much more expensive than keyboards or mice, you'll save money by using the laptop's LCD. To put it in the correct position relative to your head, elevate the computer so the top of the screen is at eye level, using a laptop stand, docking station, or a simple monitor riser. If your laptop's screen is smaller than 15 inches, however, a 17-inch or larger desktop LCD or CRT may be worth the investment, (especially if your vision is less than perfect.)

Once you have the screen at the right height: use plug-in replacements for the built-in keyboard and trackpad. USB-equipped laptops support a wide selection of mice, trackballs, and keyboards that run the gamut from conventional to exotic; choosing one is largely a matter of personal preference. While you're shopping, be wary of claims of ergonomic superiority. There is no solid research to prove many of these claims and the only way to tell whether you'll like a particular input device is by using it for a while. Therefore, shop at a store or an online vendor that has a return policy. No matter what kind of keyboard and pointing device you use, make sure they're positioned so that you can keep your back upright, your shoulders relaxed at your sides, and your forearms and wrists straight when you're typing and mousing. Make sure that you don't have to reach to use the pointing device. Using a keyboard/mouse platform will allow you to achieve this position.

Fly & Work

A laptop on a plane lets you turn wasted hours into productive work. But unless you're fortunate enough to own a private jet or can afford to always fly in first or business class, working on a laptop at 36,000 feet can be challenging. For starters, you'll probably have to make do with the laptop's built-in keyboard and display. That means you need to decide whether to optimize your laptop's position for typing or for reading.

If your in-flight work includes heavy-duty typing, try to situate the laptop so you can keep your wrists straight and your elbows at a 90-degree angle. Depending on your height, that may mean putting your computer in your lap. If you primarily need to look at the screen, elevate the laptop by putting it on the tray table. Alas, neither position offers much room for a separate pointing device, although you may be able to perch a trackball on a wide armrest.

A window seat offers some benefits when you're flying with a laptop during the day. If you're in control of the window shade, you can close it to reduce direct sunlight and reflections on your screen. The darker your surroundings are, the more you can dim the computer's backlight, saving precious battery life. (You also won't have to worry about spilling soda on the keyboard when you're passing a drink to your neighbour while bouncing around in turbulence.) But don't turn the brightness down so low that you can't read the screen comfortably, and do make sure to bring along a spare, fully charged battery in case the first runs out.

Desktop replacement



Whenever you're using a laptop on a plane, don't forget to take frequent breaks. Get up and walk around if you can; if you're stuck in your seat, at least move your feet up and down to get the blood in your legs flowing. To avoid eye-strain, look away from the display or close your eyes periodically.

Periodic Use

If you're planning to use your computer for more than a few minutes, resist the temptation to work without back support. No matter where you are, you can usually find a straight-backed chair or other seat. Most hotels that cater to business travelers provide desks with power outlets and broadband Internet access. If you must work in bed, sit with your back against the headboard or wall, and place a pillow under your knees. Above all, avoid placing the laptop in a position that forces you to swivel or bend your neck to the side to see the screen. There are lap supports that can help by supporting the computer and insulating it to

keep you cool.

Transporting a Laptop

Don't neglect ergonomics when you're toting your computer around. Even the smallest laptops weigh almost five pounds; throw an extra battery, a power adapter, a cell phone, and other digital gear into your bag, and you could be lugging close to ten pounds on your shoulder. Choose a bag with a wide, padded strap to distribute the weight, and switch sides often. If you do a lot of traveling with your laptop, consider a rolling case, but make sure that the pop-up handle is long enough that you don't have to crouch to reach it. Backpacks are a good choice if you don't need to reach inside too often.





Work-Able SOLUTIONS

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**To arrange a consultation or
to inquire about our services,
please contact Elaine Huzel.**

Work-Able Solutions is dedicated to providing quality occupational therapy services that are customized to meet the needs of our clients. Our services are designed to assist adults affected by injury or illness, achieve their maximum level of function in order to safely return to work and activities of daily living, and to assist employers to effectively prevent workplace injuries.

Work-Able Solutions is dedicated to providing evidence-based, cost-effective services. We continually adapt our programs and services to meet the changing needs of our clients and other rehabilitation stakeholders. Our clinical consultants share a dedication to ongoing education, research, and training.

Work-Able Solutions offers a wide range of assessment and rehabilitation services that address a full spectrum of impairments and disabilities. Some of our services include:

- Ergonomic assessment
- Job demands analysis
- Work site evaluation
- Functional capacity evaluation
- Personal assistance needs assessments
- Home Assessment
- Work accommodation assessment
- Education seminars
- Return to work programs
- Brain injury and neurological rehabilitation programs
- Injury prevention programs

Our Experienced Consultants



Elaine Huzel, BMR (OT)
Company Director, Occupational Therapist



Leslie Johnson, BHSc (OT)
Occupational Therapist



Tracey McIntosh, BSc OT(C)
Occupational Therapist

**Visit us on the web:
www.workablesolutions.ca**