



Work Conditioning and Work Hardening: What is the Difference?

The Injured Worker

- In 2015 2,905,900 workers were non-fatally injured on the job in the U.S.
- 31% of these cases involved days away from work.
- The median number of days away from work due to work-related injury was 8 days in 2015.
- 5.4% of cases in 2015 involved back injuries.



Around the Office:

- **Upcoming Millennium Races**
 - RibFest 5 Miler June 18th!
 - White Mountain Triathlon June 24-25th!
- **Orthopedic Lecture featuring Dr. Douglas June 15th**



The APTA defines **Work Conditioning** as a program that is “specifically designed to restore an individual’s systemic, neuromuscular function.” Programs focus on the injured worker’s muscle strength, endurance, movement, flexibility and motor control as it relates to the worker’s injury. Work conditioning programs are carried out in physical therapy gyms and can last **4-8 weeks, up to 4 hours per day, 3-5 days per week**. Symptoms are monitored and the level of difficulty is increased each week. **Work conditioning programs are “useful in producing higher percentage of return to work and an earlier return to work in a group of patients off work for at least 2 months.”**

The APTA defines **Work Hardening** as an “intensive, work-related, goal-oriented conditioning program designed specifically to restore systemic neuromuscular functions, restore physical capacity, and enable the client to return to work.” Work hardening programs are appropriate for more chronic cases and are multidisciplinary and comprehensive, including medical, psychological, behavioral, physical, functional, and vocational aspects, to address physiological, psychological, cognitive, developmental and interpersonal skills. The goal of work hardening is to prepare the mindset of the worker to return to work after finishing the program. In order to reach this goal, tasks given are made to simulate the work situation as closely as possible (resistance, number of repetitions, body position, tools used). Work hardening programs requires more dedicated space and a wider variety of equipment for task stimulation and requires the worker to dedicate up to **8 hours per day, 5 days per week for 8 weeks**. **Work hardening programs have “increased the rate of return to work by 52% in patients off work for**

Salem Sports and Rehab provides **Work Conditioning**

At 159 N Broadway 603-898-9947

Meet Salem Sports and Rehab's New Occupational Therapist!



Larissa Pickett, OTR, CHT: Larissa offers her expertise to you, serving as a certified hand therapist and occupational therapist, with 24 years of experience. She graduated from University of New Hampshire in 1993, while obtaining her Bachelor's degree in occupational therapy, and completed her Master's Degree at Southern New Hampshire University. Additionally, she has had extensive training from the Philadelphia Hand Center and from various other providers and surgeons.

Larissa has started numerous programs ranging from work conditioning, to hand therapy, to pre and post-surgical programs for communities, based on need. Specifically, she treats orthopedic, pre and post-operative episodes, and neurologic conditions, transitioning patients back to functioning. Treatments offered may consist of manual therapy, splinting, nerve/tendon/joint mobilizations, dynamically balanced upper extremity program, modalities such as neuromuscular electrical stimulation, laser treatment, iontophoresis and ultrasound, swelling control, scar management, strengthening, neuromuscular facilitation and activity of daily living/work re-training.

