

Ed's MSD Story

Behind every number at the end of the injury column is a story.

This is Ed's story.

Ed had been on quite a journey over a 10-year period from an initial lower back strain from manual lifting at work which limited his function, requiring medical evaluation and treatment because he couldn't continue to perform his job. The treatment consisted of pain medication and time off work. He returned to work without rehab or any of the causative risk factors being addressed.

Over the course of the next 10 years, Ed sustained multiple recurring lower back injury incidents. Each time, he would be treated the same way with meds, rest, and case management designed to get him back to work as soon as possible. So, after each episode he returned to work without rehab and consequently developed progressively diminished strength and functional capacity. At the end of this 10 year period, he sustained another injury to his lower back while lifting at work. This time, it was the last straw – one of the discs in his lumbar spine had finally herniated and rendered him incapable of even walking out of the facility. He was transported by ambulance to the local hospital, stabilized, evaluated by the company physician and then referred to a neurosurgical specialist.

The neurosurgeon recommended surgery. After surgery, Ed's pain worsened and it was (after 6-8 weeks) finally determined that he had developed a serious infection in his back. Four months later, Ed was referred to rehabilitation and work hardening where he met Mark Middlesworth (The founder of Ergonomics Plus) for the first time.

According to Mark, "There was not much we could do for him at that point. We gave it a shot, but in the end he just couldn't tolerate a rehab program at that point. He ended up on social security disability."

What was the cause of Ed's journey that resulted in multiple injuries, painful surgery, and a disability?

Reactive ergonomics: The Company Ed worked for had a reactive ergonomics philosophy. Ergonomic risk factors were left unchecked and Ed was exposed to these risk factors over a long period of time.

Reactive healthcare: The Company Ed worked for also had a reactive healthcare philosophy. HR was all about aggressive case management as the primary method to contain costs. They only got Ed help after he was already injured, but by then it was too late. Also, Ed would also be the first to tell you that his poor health habits and work practices were part of the problem. He was a smoker and considered his time at work to be his "fitness routine", and so he thought he didn't need anything on top of that for maintaining strength and conditioning or to maintain musculoskeletal balance and core strength. Therefore, he developed imbalances over time that ultimately led to significant core weakness and musculoskeletal dysfunction that led to recurring strain injury to his lower back.

The bottom line is that a reactive philosophy only leaves you with one outcome: **more MSD stories like Ed.**

This can be prevented. After seeing too many people like Ed go through the rehab clinic, Mark decided to be in the prevention business, founding Ergonomics Plus and going on his own journey to discovering a world class process to prevent MSDs.

That leads us to – How to Prevent Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) where we'll explore the key to MSD prevention and outline a simple prevention. Here's a hint: prevention is proactive. Now click here [The Key to MSD Prevention](#)

