"The aging workforce is a powerful force that provides tremendous value to a business and deserves planning and protection."



https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/18302-managing-an-aging-workforce





TO DO:

 Explore potential safety risk factors associated with the aging workforce.

 Help employers get a better understanding of physical and psychological changes that occur as workers age.

 Provide information to assist employers to adapt for safety and health issues pertaining to the aging workforce.

Keep experienced workers safe and productive!



How we age differs for everyone

WHAT IS AN OLDER WORKER?

"Older" worker may differ depending on job

Physical demands

- Construction worker
- Arborist
- Office worker
- Firefighter
- Accountant

AGE DESCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967

- The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) forbids age discrimination against people who are age 40 or older.
- The law prohibits discrimination in any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, benefits, and any other term or condition of employment.
- Both the Age Discrimination Employment Act of 1967 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibit workplace discrimination based on age or disability, respectively, and support the retention of qualified workers despite limitations that may come from age or disability.

STATS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states, citing data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics:

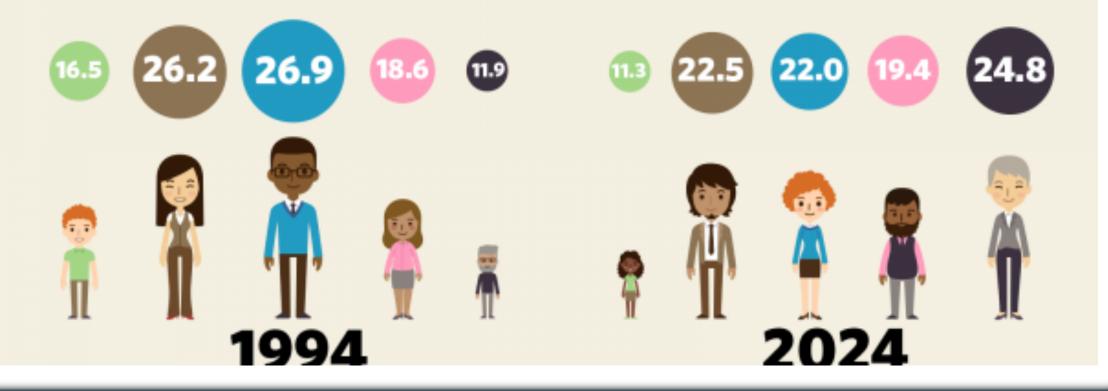
1 in every 5 American workers is over 65

In 2020, 1 in 4 American workers will be over 55

The Labor Force is Aging

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE LABOR FORCE BY AGE GROUP

Source: bls.gov



SO WHO ARE THE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS?

Here is how they are often grouped:



TRADITIONALISTS:

Value authority and a top-down management approach; hard working; 'make do or do without'.



BOOMERS 1945 - 1964

BABY BOOMERS:

Expect some degree of deference to their opinions; workaholics



GEN X 1965 – 1979

GENERATION X:

Comfortable with authority; will work as hard as is needed; importance of work life balance.



GENERATION Y:

Respect must be earned. Technologically savvy; goal and achievement oriented.



GENERATION Z:

Many traits still to emerge. Digital natives, fast decision makers, highly connected.

AGING AND PHYSICAL CHANGES

AGE 25 = Physical maturity

Age 40-50 = Most people first start to notice changes due to aging

AGE ASSOCIATED CHANGES

Biological

Physical

Cognitive

Social



 Verbal tasks and vocabulary decline with age. Verbal tasks and vocabulary remain constant or improve



AGING ON THE BRAIN

- Brain shrinks with aging included are parts of the brain important to learning and complex mental activities.
- Communication between neurons (nerve cells) may reduce. Cell support, metabolism.
- Blood flow to the brain may decrease. Although the brain is only 2 percent of the body's weight, it receives 20 percent of the body's blood supply.
- Inflammation may increase.

AGING ON THE BRAIN

- LEARNING AND COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING
 - May not think as quickly/clearly
 - May take longer to learn new skills
- FLUID INTELLIGENCE
 - (deductive reasoning/dual-task activities/information processing) declines with age.

• The most common health condition affecting workers over age 55 is hearing loss.

TRUE OR FALSE?

FALSE!

•Arthritis - 47%



AGING & CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- Most common health conditions affecting workers over age of 55:
 - Arthritis 47%
 - Hypertension 44%
 - Having at least one chronic health condition (requiring management) - 75%
 - Diabetes
 - Osteoporosis

AGING & CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- Decreased reaction time.
- Hearing loss
- Vision impairments
- Decrease strength
- Decrease stamina
- Poor balance
- Heat/Cold intolerance
- Over-exertion
- Increase medications interactions/drowsy



The risk of fatal falls increases with age.

TRUE

The risk of fatal falls across all industries increases with age.

• 20-24: 8.2 %

• 45-54: 16.8 %

• 55-64: 20.7 %

• 65 and older: 27.3 %

ON THE JOB

- OLDER WORKERS:
 - Tend to have fewer work related injuries than younger colleagues
 - Older workers are experienced workers
 - They are aware of and respect their own limitations
 - Increased caution
 - Injuries
 - Require more time to heal
 - More likely to be fatal

Chart 11: Median days away from work and incidence rate due to injuries and illnesses by age of worker, all ownerships, 2017

Year	Age group	Median days away from work ⁽¹⁾	Incidence rate per 10,000 full-time equivalent workers
2017	16 to 19 years	4	112.1
2017	20 to 24 years	5	96.3
2017	25 to 34 years	6	89.1
2017	35 to 44 years	9	90.8
2017	45 to 54 years	12	106.0
2017	55 to 64 years	15	109.5
2017	65 years and older	14	92.1
2017	Total	9	98.0

Footnotes:

(1) Median days is the measure used to summarize the varying lengths of time workers were affected by an injury or illness. Half of the cases involved more days and half involved less days than a specified median. Median days are represented in actual values.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, November 2018

AGING AND PHYSICAL CHANGES

- MUSCULAR STRENGTH AND RANGE OF JOINT MOVEMENT (Muscles, bones, joints, ligaments, tendons)
 - 15%-20% Loss of strength from ages 20-60
 - Musculoskeletal system weakens
 - Decreased capacity for load-bearing work
 - Working closer to maximum level compared to younger workers
 - Cartilage (padding between bones) deteriorates
 - Bones become more porous (more likely to fracture)
 - Loss of range of motion and flexibility

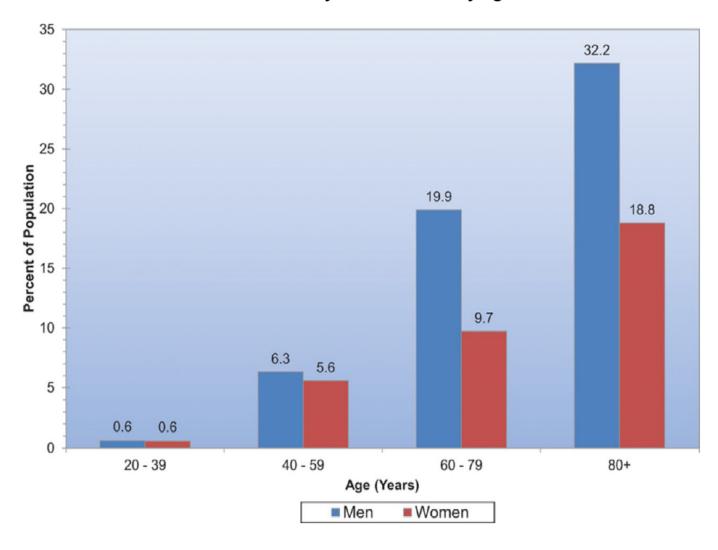
EMPLOYER - TO DO

- Provide equipment for lifting and moving loads.
- Minimize need for lifting.
 - Store at lower levels or pack in smaller quantities
- Provide ergonomic friendly work stations.
 - Grip-friendly tools, Adjustable seating
- Train Lifting, Bending, Stretching
- Offer stretch breaks
- Mark steps, floors and inspect walking surfaces

AGING AND PHYSICAL CHANGES

- CARDIOVASCULAR AND RESPIRATORY SYSTEM
 - Ability of the heart, lungs, and circulatory system to carry oxygen decreases
 - AGES 30-65 Breathing capacity can reduce by 40%
 - Reduction in physical labor ability
 - Constriction of blood vessels
 - Reduction in ability to regulate body temperature
 - Increases risk of hyperthermia (heat stroke)/hypothermia (frost bite)

Prevalence of coronary heart disease by age and sex



National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey: 2009–2012.



Mozaffarian D et al. Circulation. 2015;131:e29-e322

Copyright © American Heart Association, Inc. All rights reserved.

FIRST AID



EMPLOYER - TO DO

- Minimize lifting requirements
- Avoid/Adjust work in extreme temperatures
- Assign/Schedule work to avoid fatigue
- Provide comfortable working temperature

AGING AND PHYSICAL CHANGES

- BALANCE
 - Frequency of accidents associated with losing balance increases with age
- SLEEP
 - Aging negatively impacts body's ability to regulate sleep changing work hours, light, noise.
- BODY TEMPERATURE
 - Less able to maintain internal temperature/adjust to external temperature
 - Overheated more easily

AGING AND PHYSICAL CHANGES

VISION

- Difficulty seeing/reading from certain distances
- Changes in peripheral vision
- Changes in visual acuity (fuzzy)
- Depth perception
- Resistance to glare/light transmission
 - Lighting and avoiding small print are important

HEARING

- Decrease in ability to hear higher pitched sounds
 - Difficulty with noisy environments/background noises

EMPLOYER – TO DO

- Housekeeping
- Adequate lighting
- Use back-up warning systems (lights)
- Reduce/Control workplace noise exposure
- Provide PPE
- Encourage regular medical examinations

OLDER WORKERS ROCK! (AND NOT IN CHAIRS)

- Knowledge:
 - Work experience
 - Life experience
- More productive work habits
 - Safer work habits follow rules
- Lower stress levels related to work
- Get along with co-workers. Friendly folks!

OLDER WORKERS ROCK!

- Strong Work Ethic
- Reliability
- Lower Turnover Rate
- Role Models/Mentor
- Emotional Maturity

OLDER WORKERS ROCK! (BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN IS 70!)

- Workplace Loyalty
- Less Supervision
- Lower Absenteeism
- Economic security
- Social Interaction
- Quality of life



TRAINING

- Justify logic "What's in it for me?"
- May be resistant to learning "new ways"
- Remember EVERYONE learns differently
- Provide supportive learning environment
- Use small groups
- Self-paced learning
- Build on the familiar with connection to experience
- Avoid information overload
- Consider instruction by peer workers of same age

BE PROACTIVE!

- Manage/ELIMINATE Hazards
 - Noise distracting, hearing loss
 - Slip/Trip hazards cords, rugs, damaged flooring, wet/slippery flooring
 - Chairs adjustable
 - Lighting
- Workplace design work surfaces, lighting
- Ergonomic interventions orthotics, lift assist (lift tables) every age!
- MANY ACCOMMODATIONS ARE EASY AND INEXPENSIVE (safety grant)
- Your friends at BWC Will Help!

AGE-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

- Promote health and healthy lifestyles
 - Provide physical activity opportunities
 - Walking groups, yoga/stretching, gym membership group discounts
 - Sit-stand work stations
 - Healthy meal options what do you have in your vending?
 - Smoking cessation assistance
 - Health screenings (BYBO!)
 - On-site medical care Flu vaccine clinic
 - Accommodate (flexible) for health care visits.

AGE-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

- Flexibility (workers prefer this over additional vacation days!)
 - Flexible schedule
 - Work location
 - Flexibility of work schedule part-time shift, job-sharing, work from home
- Tasks
 - Match to ability
 - Self-paced work
 - Self-directed rest breaks
 - Less repetitive tasks

AGE-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

- Return to work after injury
 - Provide/manage accommodations to return to work

- Train management skills for supervisors
 - Effective ways to manage multi-generational workplace

TRUE OR FALSE?



 In most cases, training and adaptations can improve workplace safety and offset effects of changes related to aging.

