



# JOB READY SERVICES

NOVEMBER 2012 ISSUE



Functional assessment can identify if a job-related deficit is present

## OUR SERVICES:

- Functional Capacity Evaluations
- Work Conditioning
- Job Analyses
- Fit for Duty Testing
- Employment Testing

## What Time is the Best Time to Do These?

Fit for Duty, Physical Abilities Test, and Functional Capacity Evaluation

A frequent question is raised as to when a functional capacity exam is needed. A functional assessment is needed at the time of hire, post employment and post injury to **identify whether a job related deficit is present, and if identified, provide information on the best way to abate the deficit.** Post injury, a functional assessment is needed to successfully develop a treatment program to facilitate return to work, to measure the physical abilities of an injured worker before and after a rehab program, to modify rehab when needed, to evaluate what an injured worker can do safely, to determine when he/she can return to work and/or to facilitate case closure. There are a variety of assessment tools available and which one to use is dependent on the circumstances and the employment relationship at the time of testing.

The following functional tools are available:

- **Post Offer Employment Test (POET)** occurs after contingent offer is accepted and prior to placement on the job and allows employer to gather baseline medical/physical information and compare the employee's abilities to the physical demands of the job.
- **Physical Abilities Test (PAT)** is administered to an existing non-injured employee as identified by an observed work-related deficit or to attest that workers in physical demanding jobs continue to demonstrate their abilities to safely perform the essential functions of the job
- **Fit for Duty (FFD)** is a functional assessment of a current employee post-injury and focuses on the area of injury as it relates to the safe performance of the essential functions and is "job related and consistent with business necessity".

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## CALL US FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Raleigh, NC 27604  
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[www.jobreadyservices.net](http://www.jobreadyservices.net)

## LUNCH &amp; LEARNS

**The Use of Fit for Duty Testing to Reduce Work Disability**

Speaker: Debra Lord, Job Ready Services

Cost: \$10.00

Credits Approved: CCM (1 hr)

**Use, Misuse & Abuse of Opioids in Worker's Compensation Cases**

Speaker: Dr. Hsiupe Chen, Rex Pain Management

Cost: \$10.00

Credits Pending Approval: CCM (1 hour)

Contact hours have been applied for from the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses

To register, visit our website:

<http://www.jobreadyservices.net/index.php/education/lunch-and-learns-seminars/>

or, contact Michelle Morgan at 919-256-1400 or [michelle.morgan@jobreadyservices.net](mailto:michelle.morgan@jobreadyservices.net)

## NEW STAFF MEMBER

**CALEB BALLARD, OTR/L, MOT, CEAS I**

Caleb is an occupational therapist originally from Paducah, Kentucky. He now resides in the Raleigh area. When not working, Caleb enjoys participating sporting events, cooking on his smoker, and playing with his new puppy (Hooper).



## FUNCTIONAL TESTING, CONTINUED.

- **Functional Capacity Exam (FCE)** is an instrument to reliably measure the functional physical ability of a person to perform a work-related series of tasks and provide information to aid in return to work and vocational placement if data is reliable.

**Findings of Fact:**

- EEOC says an employer does not need to retain a new hire or existing worker if they cannot *safely perform the essential functions of their job* or are at imminent risk to themselves or others. An individualized assessment is needed and the decision to sever the employment relationship can only be based on a job-related deficit that cannot be negated with a reasonable accommodation
- ADA says you can ask an employee to *demonstrate how they are going to demonstrate the ability to perform the essential functions of their job safely* and be productive
- *A physician's note does not negate the responsibility of the employer* to perform due diligence in testing an existing worker after injury
- The AMA Guidelines to Functional Assessments indicates *a physician should not provide functional restrictions unless a functional assessment has been performed*
- Many times a job-related deficit does not exist but injured workers are kept from the workplace due to *lack of employer policies to return the worker to the job* as soon as possible.

So to the question of when do you do a functional assessment, the answer is simply anytime you need information as to an employee's ability to work. Waiting to do a full FCE at MMI and then discovering the injured worker still has a work-related deficit and/or did not provide a valid effort is both wasteful of monies and time in returning a worker back to the workplace. The information could have been gathered shortly post injury and the deficit and pattern of behavior could have been addressed. **Best practice models recognize a need for a FFD exam as soon as medically stable post injury** and repeated exams to identify progress in reducing work-related deficits. The injured worker can return to work safely within safe abilities and once the deficit is no longer present, return to full duty versus waiting until a FCE is performed at MMI.

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*"Your Stamp of Approval for Workplace Fitness."*



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**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST AND/OR CALL-OUTS**

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**NOTES**

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*“Stay away from using jargon, acronyms, or complicated terms. Quotes are enjoyable.”*

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