



## University-Industry Partnership Studies Auto Workers Ergonomic Situation

### Features and Benefits

Development of new ergonomic methods

University-based full scale manufacturing operation

Occupational health risk is minimized

Research ways to use material handling equipment to reduce these stresses on workers

**Industry Group:** Hoist Manufacturers Institute (HMI)



*"Products such as lift tables, jib cranes, hoists, and rigging products, are all being used as vital parts of this revolutionary program"*

In the automotive industry, a single back injury can add as much as \$2,000 to the cost of production of a single vehicle. But until recently, there hasn't been very much research into the ways that U.S. automakers could reduce stress, fatigue and injury to U.S. auto workers. A university and industry collaboration has developed a think-tank that has begun to research ways to use material handling equipment to reduce these stresses on workers.

This research will assist with the development of new methods and techniques towards improving the ergonomics for production workers. Ultimately, these studies and developments will help U.S. automakers increase safety, output, efficiency and profits. Products such as lift tables, jib cranes, hoists, and rigging products, are all being used as vital parts of this revolutionary program.

With an aging and longstanding workforce, US auto manufacturers are beginning to understand the needs of these particular workers. By helping them avoid injuries, the costs of vehicle production can be

kept down and potentially help make American automotive makers more competitive.

Largely funded through partnerships with major automakers, the program is a unique interdisciplinary partnership between an assortment of University Departments, various automobile manufacturers, and numerous automobile suppliers with the overall intent to design assembly tasks and processes so that occupational health risk is minimized and productivity and quality are optimized.

Uniquely, the new Ohio based university program is the only university-based full scale manufacturing operation in the world where automobile manufacturers as well as suppliers can test the effects of manufacturing systems on the health of workers.



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