

ASTF FIT FOR FINANCE

Newsletter of the Occupational Health Service for the Financial Sector



Creating an award of excellence

The Luxembourg financial sector is a pillar of the national economy. In addition to this, it has also in recent years asserted itself as one of the most important financial centres in the world.

Obviously, this implies a high level of specialised professional expertise, based especially on a sound introductory and continued training of employees within a company. To guarantee a continued level of high performance, the health and well-being of personnel are undoubtedly a fundamental prerequisite. Consequently, health must be maintained, cultivated and improved or restored if necessary.

The ASTF intends in future to bestow an annual award of excellence on a company of the financial sector, based on several criteria:

- the adherence to legal provisions in matters of health and safety
- the provision of working conditions adapted to comply with ergonomic principles
- the follow-up of employees according to criteria regarding absences and various problem issues (sickness, dependencies)
- the positive promotion of employees' health (health checks provided by company, employee assistant programmes)...

The objective of this type of initiative is to promote the health of employees and consequently to enhance the competitiveness of companies.

The very low average age of employees in our sector conveys a false sense of security. A quantitatively significant epidemiological cohort will age simultaneously and the only way to counteract this phenomenon is to promote health among personnel.

Additional information on this ASTF initiative will be published in our next newsletter.

Holidays in the snow

Fitness

Each year, the carnival break signals a mass exodus to the Alps, with hundreds of thousands of people, who during the year engage in no physical activity whatsoever, exposing themselves during one week to the risks of alpine skiing without the slightest preparation. To stop this from happening to you, we have prepared a fitness plan for you to start one month prior to your departure. Dedicate a quarter of an hour to the exercises each day and your muscles will thank you for it!

To warm up your muscles, run for 2 minutes on the spot before starting the exercises.

Abdominals (crunches)

Crunches strengthen your abdominal muscles, allowing you to lean forward on your skis more without having to arch your back... and to get up more easily following a fall! Lie down, with your lower back flat on the floor. Your lumbar spine must always maintain contact with the floor. Curl your shoulder blades up and touch your knees with your hands. Repeat slowly 20-30 times. If this feels too easy to you, place your hands behind your head, but take care not to pull on your neck.

Paravertebral muscles

The abdominal and paravertebral muscles are useful and required for all sporting activities, since they protect the vertebral column. Lie down on your stomach with your hands behind your head or, if this proves too difficult, with your arms alongside your body. Lift your



upper body, using controlled strength, not momentum, before lowering it back down again. Your feet should be pressed together and remain on the floor. Repeat slowly 20-30 times.

Genuflexions (squats)

This exercise strengthens all the extensor and flexor muscles of the thigh, the most important muscles for skiing. Stand with your feet slightly apart. Flex your knees and lower your hips, as though you are about to sit on a chair. Your back must remain completely straight and your knees must not cross the toe line. Straighten your legs again and repeat 20-30 times.

Scissors

Lie down on your back and lift your legs up to a vertical position. Move them 20-30cm apart before crossing them one over the other. Repeat rapidly 20-30 times. This way you strengthen your adductor muscles, allowing you to parallel ski, and your psoas muscle, a powerful hip flexor that will help you maintain your balance on the black slopes!



Happy holidays!

Finish off your exercise session with a few stretching exercises. Supple, well-stretched muscles are less prone to strain and injury.

The adductors

Sit with your back flat against a wall. Hold on to your ankles and push your knees towards the floor. This exercise stretches the adductor muscles of the thigh. Maintain the position for 30 seconds and repeat.



The quadriceps

Hold on to a wall or the back of a chair for balance. Bend your left leg towards your buttocks while pulling on your ankle. It is important for your pelvis to remain straight and your knees to remain pressed against one another. Do not rotate your back! This will stretch your quadriceps muscle, with sits in the front of your thigh. Maintain the position for 30 seconds before changing legs.



push pelvis downwards

The calves

Position yourself at 1m from a wall, step forward bending your left leg, keeping your right leg stretched with its heel firmly positioned on the floor. Now push your pelvis downwards so that your entire body forms a straight line from your head down to your right heel. You will feel a stretching sensation in your calf. Maintain this for 30 seconds before repeating the same with the opposite leg.



lift buttocks upwards

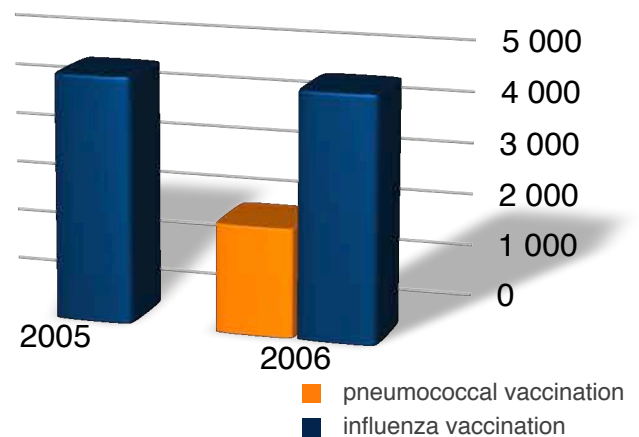
The ischio-tibials

Position one foot 30cm in front of you. Bend your back leg, keeping the front leg straight. Lean forward while maintaining a straight back and lift your buttocks upwards. You should feel a stretching sensation in the posterior part of your thigh (ischio-tibial muscles). Maintain this position for 30 seconds and repeat, changing legs.



ASTF vaccination campaign – a huge success

In 2006, the ASTF recommended a pneumococcal vaccination in addition to the annual influenza vaccination. This additional and optional vaccination, recommended for reducing the risk of complications (e.g. bronchitis) from an influenza pandemic, met with a great response. A total of 6,545 vaccinations were carried out on behalf of 191 participating companies, confirming the obvious interest shown by the companies involved. 4,533 influenza vaccinations (compared with 4,566 in 2005) and 2,012 pneumococcal vaccinations were administered.



World's first cancer vaccine

At the beginning of the current year 2007, we assisted in the launch of a new vaccine against human papillomavirus. This preventative vaccine is expected to offer protection against two thirds of cervical cancers. Human papillomavirus is very common and affects approximately 70% of the sexually active population. Even though in most cases it manifests itself only as cutaneous warts or ano-genital condylomes, in a small percentage of infections it is responsible for the development of cervical cancer.

The vaccine currently costs around €150 and requires three shots! Immunity is conferred for 4-5 years. Regular screening for cervical cancer by means of a cervical smear is nonetheless recommended, since the vaccine protects only certain, not all, strains of papillomavirus. In addition, a third of cervical cancer cases are not due to a viral infection.

The vaccine is recommended above all for adolescent girls before they become sexually active.

New stop smoking medication

Another new entry onto the pharmaceutical market was sealed by the launch of Champix, a new medication to stop smoking. It has a double action: on the one hand, it alleviates the urge to smoke while reducing other nicotine withdrawal symptoms and, on the other hand, it reduces the satisfaction derived from smoking a cigarette. Champix comes in the form of capsules, to be taken twice daily for the duration of a twelve-week course. Smokers who have successfully given up smoking are prescribed an additional twelve-week course. The close involvement of a health professional is recommended.