

Tom Waters, who loved outdoor activities including bicycling, died October 29 while cycling. In an instant, I lost a close friend and colleague with whom I had the privilege to collaborate with for many years.

I was introduced to Tom by Vern Putz-Anderson, who had hired him at NIOSH. I was a member of an ad hoc committee and in the process of finalizing the Revised NIOSH Lifting Equation; Tom was the project's coordinator. Through Tom's tireless efforts we were able to quickly finalize the Equation, get it approved by the ad hoc committee members, stakeholders and finally by the NIOSH as an official publication of CDC (NIOSH). It was a major accomplishment for everyone involved and continues to positively impact the jobs of workers to this day. Soon after it's development, Tom became very interested in applying the Revised NIOSH Lifting Equation to patient handling and he actively participated in the safe patient handling movement. At a time when manually lifting and transferring patients was the norm, Tom promoted, presented and published the use of mechanical lifts and other patient handling devices to prevent back and other musculoskeletal injuries to care givers. Thanks in part to Tom's efforts, these devices are now commonplace in healthcare and have had a dramatic impact on the health of nurses and nursing aides.

Tom was passionate about protecting workers and had many wonderful ideas some of which I was fortunate to work on with him. One of my favorite projects with Tom was the Youth Biomechanical Model he and I developed to analyze risk of musculoskeletal injuries to children working in agriculture. About three years ago Tom formed an ad hoc committee to develop an equation similar to the Revised NIOSH Lifting Equation, but for pushing/pulling of carts and loads. However, Tom decided to take retirement before this work could be completed. Tom's retirement marked the close to his and my professional collaborations, but our friendship endured.

With the loss of Tom, the ergonomics community has lost a champion whose work had a major impact in preventing musculoskeletal injuries in manufacturing, warehousing, service, agriculture and nursing homes, hospitals and home health care. Many in the community will miss Tom. I have lost a dear friend and will cherish the memories of all the time we spent together.

Thank-you Tom; for everything.
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