

Musculoskeletal Disorders: Impact and Recommendations

What is a Musculoskeletal Disorder?

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are disorders that affect your muscles, joints, bones, and other body parts like tendons and ligaments. These issues can cause pain and make it hard to do simple things like **bending, lifting, or reaching**. MSDs are common and can seriously affect workers and their jobs. Treatment can vary: for mild cases, people might take over-the-counter medicine, while more serious cases may need physical therapy or even surgery.

Why Do These Conditions Occur?

Many things can cause musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). **A lot of MSDs come from work activities like doing the same movements over and over, lifting heavy items, bending, reaching up, or holding uncomfortable positions.** Doing these activities repeatedly can put strain on your muscles and joints, which can lead to problems like carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, and lower back pain.



Carpal tunnel syndrome

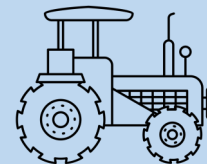
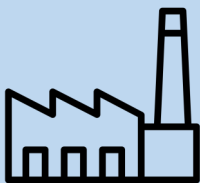


Tendonitis



Lower back pain

MSDs are not limited to specific industries; they can occur in various workplaces, including **manufacturing, warehouses, office environments, health care, transportation, agriculture, and retail.**



What Should Employers Do?

Identify Hazards: Regularly assess the workplace for potential hazards. This includes “quick” hazards that could cause an accident or injury, as well as “slow” hazards that, over time, raise workers’ risks of MSDs. An ergonomist can help you identify MSD hazards and develop solutions. They are experts in redesigning workplaces and processes for both worker safety and efficiency.

Get the right fit: One size does not fit all. What works for one worker may pose a risk to another. Equipment and tools need to be a good fit for each worker in terms of size, height, weight, and pressure calibration.

Have goals your employees can meet—and keep meeting over time: Risks arise when work demands exceed employees’ capabilities, resulting in accidents, damage, illness, or disease. Ensure that employees have the necessary resources and time to complete tasks safely and sustainably, without unnecessary risk.

Increase Break Frequency: Encouraging more frequent breaks is an easy way to help reduce muscle strain and prevent work-related injuries.

Provide Ergonomic Training: Employee training is a crucial part of MSD prevention. Offer training in languages and contexts that employees understand, using visual aids, hands-on training, regular check-ins, and multilingual resources.

Encourage Early Reporting: Train employees to recognize the signs and symptoms of MSDs and report them in a timely manner.

What Should Workers Do?

Communicate Needs: Communicate with your supervisor or HR about any workplace health and safety needs.

Implement Training: Apply the training provided to your daily work routine.

Pay Attention to Your Body: MSD can cause many different symptoms. Pay attention if you regularly experience pain, numbness, tingling or other muscle and joint symptoms that you think are related to your work.

Prioritize Self-Care: Visit your primary care provider for routine check-ups; early prevention is key to avoiding lifelong conditions.

