



WHAT IS A MSD?

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) can be defined as injuries or disorders of the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, cartilage, and spinal discs.

MSDS INCLUDE:

- Tendinitis
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Osteoarthritis
- Bone fractures
- Fibromyalgia
- Rheumatoid arthritis (RA)

MSDs are common, and your risk of developing them increases with age. The severity of MSDs can vary. In some cases, they cause pain and discomfort that interferes with everyday activities.

SYMPTOMS OF MSDS CAN INCLUDE:

- Recurrent pain
- Stiff joints
- Swelling
- Dull aches

THEY CAN AFFECT ANY MAJOR AREA OF YOUR MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:



NECK



SHOULDERS



WRISTS



BACK



HIPS



LEGS



KNEES



FEET



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CAUSES OF MSDS

In some cases, the symptoms of MSDs interfere with everyday activities like walking or typing. You may develop a limited range of motion or have trouble completing routine tasks.

Your risk of developing MSDs is affected by: **age**, **occupation**, **activity level**, **lifestyle** & **family history**.

Certain activities can cause wear and tear on your musculoskeletal system, leading to MSDs. These include:

- Sitting in the same position at a computer every day
- Engaging in repetitive motions
- Lifting heavy weights
- Maintaining poor posture at work
- Fixed or constrained body positions
- Force concentrated on small parts of the body such as the hand or wrist
- A pace of work that does not allow sufficient recovery between movements.

According to the HSE in 2020/21 MSDs accounted for **28%** of all work-related I'll health cases. With **45%** of those related to upper limbs and neck, followed by back injuries which were **39%** of the total 490,000 reported cases.

In terms of occupation, the average rate of work-related musculoskeletal disorders in skilled trades occupations were higher than in all other job sectors.



Manual handling and prolonged working with display screen equipment can be two of the high-risk tasks when not carried out correctly.

Both tasks are often unavoidable, but the good news is that there are plenty of ways to reduce the chances of a WRMSD.





HOW TO PREVENT MSDS

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders can develop in an occupational setting due to the physical tasks with which individuals carry out their normal work activities.

WRMSDs are associated with work patterns that include:

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS?



STRATEGY #1: ERGONOMICS

A strong workplace ergonomics process will match the work to the capabilities and limitations of the worker in the most efficient and productive way possible. An ergonomics improvement process reduces ergonomic risk factors such as high task repetition, forceful exertions and repetitive/sustained awkward postures.



STRATEGY #2: EXERCISE

By increasing muscle mass, strength and cardiovascular endurance through exercise, status improves for sports and activities of daily living and protects against injury. Specific exercise programs are also commonly prescribed to rehabilitate patients after major/minor surgery and musculoskeletal injury.



STRATEGY #3: EARLY INTERVENTION

Early intervention is a proactive strategy to find early signs of an injury and prevent it from happening and identify WRMSD risk factors as soon as possible (early signs include fatigue, discomfort, pain). Don't ignore any signs or symptoms, talk to your medic or GP for advice.





HOW TO BOUNCE BACK FROM INJURY WITH MENTAL FITNESS

When we experience an injury during exercise, we tend to forget about the impact on our mental wellbeing. Exercise is great for natural highs and feelgood factor, it's a powerful natural anti-depressant and great way to deal with the stresses and strains of daily life.

So, when you experience an injury all that comes to an abrupt stop. And instead, you may experience a sense of frustration and helplessness (depending on the severity of the injury).

Step 1: Focus on what you can control, not what you can't

Step 2: Remember that rest is not time wasted, it is necessary for your body to heal

Step 3: Find alternative forms of exercise that you can do – with approval from your GP or physio

Step 4: Experiment with meditation to help with any anxiety you may be feeling

Step 5: Set realistic goals

Step 6: Accept help and support

If you are struggling to deal with your injury, don't bottle it up, talk to someone who can help you get through this tough time.

Sources

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