

## What else do you call MSDs?

- ▶ Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSIs)
- ▶ Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTDs)
- ▶ Repetitive Motion Injuries (RMIs)
- ▶ Workplace pains and strains

## What is an MSD?

- ▶ Back pain (i.e., low back strain)
- ▶ Muscle strain
- ▶ Tendonitis
- ▶ Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- ▶ Rotator Cuff Syndrome
- ▶ Tennis Elbow (epicondylitis)
- ▶ Shoulder pain (shoulder myalgia)

## What are symptoms of an MSD?

- ▶ Tightness, discomfort, stiffness, soreness or burning in the hands, wrists, fingers, forearms, or elbows
- ▶ Tingling, coldness, or numbness in the hands
- ▶ Clumsiness or loss of strength and coordination in the hands
- ▶ Pain that wakes you up at night
- ▶ Feeling a need to massage your hands, wrists, and arms
- ▶ Pain in the upper back, shoulders, or neck

## What are some MSD risk factors?

- ▶ Work that places the elbows above shoulder height or the hands behind the body
- ▶ Tasks that call for frequent bending or twisting of the neck
- ▶ Work requiring frequent or prolonged grasping and holding of objects, or frequent wrist movements
- ▶ Work that requires frequent lifting of items from below knee height or above the shoulders
- ▶ Work requiring frequent bending or twisting at the waist
- ▶ Tasks that involve carrying, lifting, pushing, or pulling heavy or awkward loads
- ▶ Spending long periods with a body part held in any one position without movement
- ▶ Psychosocial factors relating to work demands, such as control over work and effort-reward imbalance in the job

## What are common myths about pains and strains in the workplace?

- ▶ MSDs only develop in workers involved in manual labour. It can't happen to me!
  - Regardless of industry or profession, MSDs target all individuals in the workplace. MSDs affect the muscles, tendons, ligaments, and nerves in the human body, and develop as a result of repetitive, forceful, and/or awkward movements.
- ▶ MSDs occur most frequently in the arms and hands, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, rotator cuff syndrome, tennis elbow, and shoulder pain.
  - An MSD can occur in almost any part of the body. In fact, the body part most often affected by an MSD is the back. The latest research suggests that most spinal discs are injured by cumulative weight being applied – essentially, it's like “the straw that broke the camel's back.”
- ▶ People need to be reminded to bend their knees when they lift in order to prevent an MSD.
  - Yes, it's true that we have greater strength and mechanical advantage by bending the knees. However, it's just as important to maintain your back's natural curves, especially the arch in your lower back, when lifting an item. Also, take a close look at the job you're doing and see if you can reduce the amount of lifting, carrying, and climbing.
- ▶ MSDs are just a natural part of getting old.
  - A surprising number of young people are reporting MSDs at work and at home. “Blackberry thumb” is the newest MSD of the computer age. While it's true that certain disorders, such as degenerative disc disease, are part of the aging process, it's possible to still have a healthy body as you get older. It's not age that dictates the onset of an MSD, it's the risk factors that you're exposed to and your work practices.
- ▶ Ergonomics is just the latest buzzword in how to prevent MSDs – prevention is really just basic common sense.
  - MSDs were first documented by Bernardino Ramazzini, the father of occupational medicine, in 1713. The term “ergonomics” was first used by a Polish educator and scientist, Wojciech Jastrzebowski (1799-1882). For centuries, people have been trying to “work smarter, not harder”. Those who have been successful have realized that it is more than just common sense and it often is not common practice. The main goal of ergonomics is to reduce the risk of MSDs by matching the demands of the job to the abilities of the worker through proper design of workstations, tools, environment, work schedules, policies, and procedures.

## How can I prevent MSDs?

- ▶ When working at a desk, make sure your workstation is properly adjusted to suit your needs.
- ▶ Find something in your day that occurs every hour or so and associate that with your time to stop and stretch. For example, when you receive a phone call or when you hear the news on the radio.
- ▶ When working at a computer, occasionally look away from the screen and focus on a distant object to rest the eyes.
- ▶ Perform simple stretching exercises to reduce muscular discomfort:
  - Conduct stretching exercises slowly and smoothly.
  - Hold each stretch for approximately 15 to 30 seconds.
  - Relax the muscles between stretches.
  - A specific stretch produces better results when repeated at least two times.
- ▶ Get out and go for a walk for some fresh air.
- ▶ In a home office call a mental time out and decide whether or not to set personal boundaries between work and your personal life to maintain a healthy balance.
- ▶ Each day, set aside five minutes for a mental health break.

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