



**EUROPEAN SAFETY WEEK  
“LIGHTEN THE LOAD” CAMPAIGN  
PREVENTING MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS**



NATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY FUNCTION (NHSF), 2022

**PREVENTING MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS (MSDs) WHILE USING DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE)**

Working in static/fixed posture such as at a computer screen for sustained periods of time is a risk factor which can contribute to developing MSDs and poorly designed workstation ergonomics will add to this risk. The importance of awareness, training, risk assessment and providing opportunities to take task breaks away from DSE activity cannot be underestimated. The NHSF have developed practical guidance and useful tips on the management of MSDs and post injury rehabilitation which are available [here](#).



**Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2020-22  
LIGHTEN THE LOAD**

Prevention and management of work-related musculoskeletal disorders



**First it is important to know if you are a DSE User? The legislation describes a DSE user as;**

- An employee has no choice but to use the DSE to carry out their work
- An employee who normally uses the DSE for continuous periods of more than one hour
- If the DSE equipment is generally used by the employee on a daily basis.



**Under this legislation both Managers and Employees have responsibilities:**

As an employee, you must:

- take reasonable care of your safety, health and welfare
- complete the DSE user awareness module on HSElanD and implement any changes highlighted in this training
- review your risk assessments and control measures to ensure they are effective
- Introduce breaks in your activity so you can change posture and move
- report any defects in work equipment to your manager

As a manager, you must:

- identify any DSE users within your department or service
- undertake DSE Assessors module and general DSE awareness training on HSElanD
- complete a DSE [risk assessment](#) for each user
- implement any control measures identified
- plan work activities to ensure breaks and changes in activities
- ensure staff complete the DSE User Awareness module

**What you can do to prevent MSDs as a DSE user**

**Change posture frequently**

- Between sitting, standing and moving around
- While sitting (dynamic sitting)



**Take micro breaks and stretch every 20/30 minutes**

**Incorporate more movement and flexibility into daily working life**

- Take the stairs
- Get up from the desk to eat, stretch, phone
- Drivers – take regular breaks and get out of the vehicle to eat, stretch, phone, rest



**Introduce stretching breaks into meetings**



**CONTACT US**

To log a request for health & safety information, a device or support please go to: <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/health-and-safety/health-and-safety-helpdesk.html>

Alternatively contact the National Health & Safety Helpdesk on 1800 420 420 between 10:30-12:00 and 14:00 – 15:30, Monday to Friday



**Note:** Laptops should not be used for long periods, without the addition of external equipment such as a separate mouse, monitor and keyboard, to aid optimal workstation set-up).

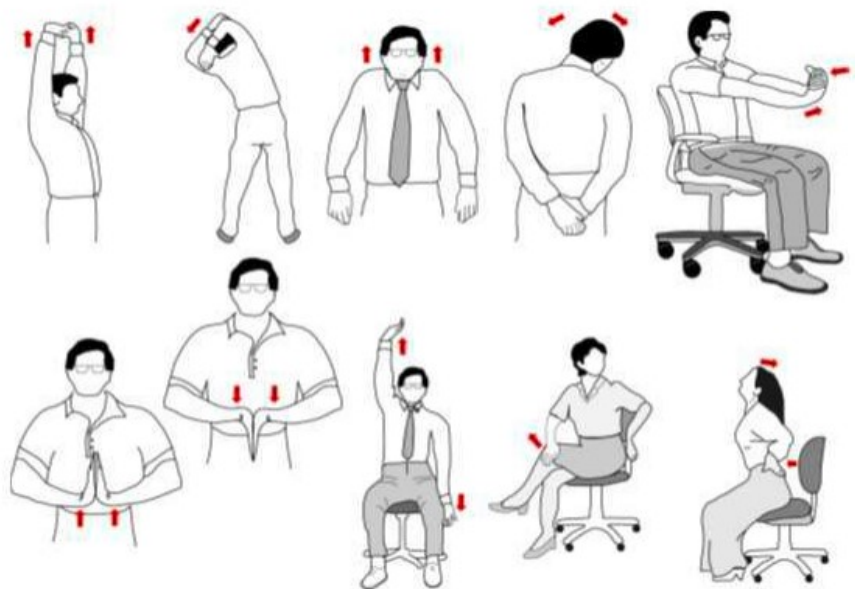
**When seated ensure the following:**

1. Your back is straight and the lower back is supported by the back rest
2. Your thighs are parallel to the floor in a slightly downward position
3. Your feet are resting comfortably on the floor (if this is not possible, a footrest may be required)
4. Your forearms and wrists are in a straight line while typing, your shoulders are relaxed
5. Eyes are level with top of screen or slightly below eye level
6. The screen is approximately at arms length and is positioned to avoid reflective glare
7. Keyboard is directly in front of you with enough space to rest forwards on the desk between keyboard and desk edge

**Take time to Stretch regularly:**

Stretching can help reduce injury by increasing flexibility. The following stretches can be performed at any time during the day. All of the stretches should be performed slowly and in a controlled manner.

Not everyone has the same range of movement so, if at any time, you feel any discomfort or pain beyond the intended stretch, do not push beyond it, stop and return to centre. On your breaks make sure you can get up and move, go for a walk you will feel the better for it.



**Planning Your Work:**

Managers must carry out a the [DSE Risk assessments](#) with all DSE users.

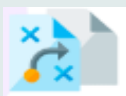


Communicate and consult with employees at all stages of the risk assessment process. This will ensure the nature of the work activities are understood.



Implement appropriate changes in work practices and provide relevant training and/or equipment.

Review the risk assessment with your staff to see the effectiveness of those changes implemented



**Training:**

All DSE users must complete the following training on [HSELand](#), the DSE user awareness module You will find this training in the Health & Safety Catalogue.

Managers and DSE workstation assessors must complete the following training modules on HSELand:

1. Managing health and safety in the healthcare setting
2. DSE user awareness module
3. DSE assessor module



Managers or staff who have responsibility for undertaking workplace occupational safety and health risk assessments must have completed the Occupational Safety and Health Risk Assessment Webinar available on HSELand.