



**EUROPEAN SAFETY WEEK
"LIGHTEN THE LOAD" CAMPAIGN
PREVENTING MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS**



NATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY FUNCTION (NHSF), 2022

PREVENTING INJURY

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are painful disorders of muscles, tendons and nerves that develop over time from tasks that repeatedly cause stress and injury to tissues. MSDs include work-related upper limb disorders (WRULDs) and repetitive strain injuries (RSIs). The NHSF have focused on three themes; preventing injury, keeping healthy and post injury/rehabilitation. Practical information and guidance on the prevention and management of MSDs have been developed by the NHSF for you and are available [here](#).



**Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2020-22
LIGHTEN THE LOAD**
Prevention and management of work-related musculoskeletal disorders



Why are work related MSDs a problem?

Work related MSDs are caused or aggravated primarily by work and by the effects of the immediate environment in which work is carried out. MSDs are a cause for concern not only because of their effects on the health of an individual but also because of the impact on service delivery. The most common MSDs among workers are back pain and muscular pains in the upper limbs. Muscular pains in lower limbs are reported less often

Ref: Analysis carried out by EU-OSHA.

Why prevent MSDs?

Experiencing pain at work as a result of an MSD is likely to affect performance and productivity in your role. Work related MSDs are one of the most common causes of disability and sick leave. This can also impact your personal circumstances such as finances as well as your ability to take part in everyday life activities such as sport, pastimes and general family time. We have significant resources and information on preventing injury and management of MSDs and post injury/ rehabilitation available on our website [here](#)

Preventing MSDs:

[Risk Assessment](#) is the basis for successful safety and health management and is the key to the prevention and management of musculoskeletal disorders.

Risk Factors to consider in relation to MSDs include:

Physical and Environmental Factors

(e.g. work postures, repetitive work, heavy physical loads)



Psychosocial Factors

(e.g. control over tasks, support from colleagues / management)



Organisational Factors

(e.g. long working hours, pace of work)



Individual Employee Factors

(e.g. age, gender, physical capacity, prior medical history, height)



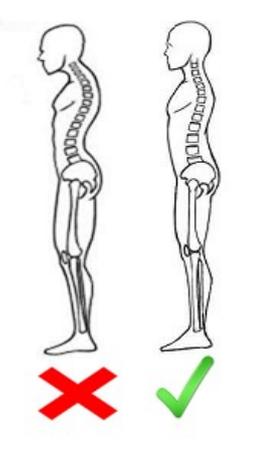
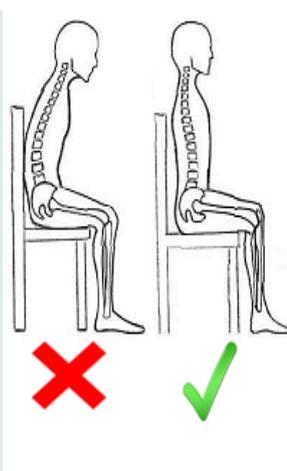
PREVENTION OF MSDs

Maintaining a Good Posture:

It is so important to maintain a good posture as this will support your muscles, ligaments and joints surrounding the spine. Good posture will ensure your back muscles remain balanced, supporting the body equally. Your posture is how you hold your body and it can be dynamic or static.

- **Dynamic posture** is how you hold yourself when you are moving, like when you are walking, running or bending over to pick up something.
- **Static posture** is how you hold yourself when you are not moving, like when you are sitting, standing or sleeping.

Making sure that you hold your body the right way, whether you are moving or still, can prevent MSDs, pain, injuries and other health problems. The key to good posture is the position of your spine. Your spine has three natural curves in a slight 'S' shape; at your neck, mid back and lower back. Correct posture should maintain these curves, but not increase them.

	<p>Standing - To maintain the neutral 'S' shape of your spine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Line up your head, shoulders, and hips• Keep your head upright and relaxed• Your shoulders should be level with your arms relaxed at your sides		<p>Sitting - To maintain the neutral 'S' shape of your spine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep feet on the floor or use a footrest, don't cross your legs• Hips slightly higher than your knees with a small gap between your knees and seat• Lower back is supported• Head, neck, shoulders, elbows, hips in alignment
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Training: Training is another key component in the prevention of MSDs in the workplace. Managers must carry out a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) to ensure all relevant training is undertaken.

It is a statutory requirement that all employees attend manual handling training relevant to their role, work activities and work environment. Please visit the NHSF training section on the website for further information.



MSD Prevention Tips

The NHSF have developed information sheets with practical and useful tips and advice for the following job categories:

- Laboratory Roles
- Display Screen Equipment Users
- Catering Roles
- Clinical Roles

CONTACT US



To log a request for health & safety information, advice 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