australian LIFESAVER training

HAZARDOUS MANUAL TASKS

minimising the risk of Musculoskeletal Disorders

Symptoms

Pain, joint stiffness, muscle tightness, redness, swelling of the affected area, numbness, “pins and needles" sensations, skin colour changes

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are the most frequent type of lost-time injury and the single largest source of lost-time costs in Australia.

Common causes

Material handling

Discomfort, pain or injury due to repeated lifting, pushing and pulling.

Inadequate job design

Pace of work, production pressure, lack of sufficient time to recover from overwork.

Workstation

Poor furniture, layout or job design.

Sedentary tasks

Discomfort, pain or injury due to sustained posture and motion economy.

Repetitive motion injuries

Risk factors due to job design, awkward body motions, and tools.

Mental or emotional stress

Psychosocial risk factors creating tension that reduces effective circulation.

What employers can do

Eliminate hazards at the source through job design changes:

Automation

automate tasks

Team work

distribute work evenly among team members

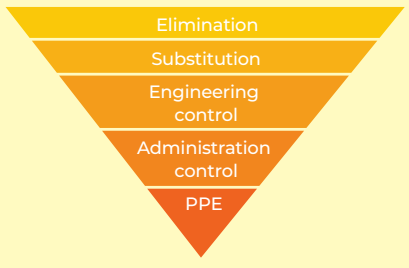
Job or task rotation

move between different tasks

Dynamic movement

increase dynamic movement, minimise sustained postures

Hierarchy of controls



If elimination of repetitive patterns of work is not possible, prevention strategies can focus on:

Workplace design

fitting the workstation to the worker

Assistive devices

using carts, hoists, or other mechanical handling devices

Work practices

training workers, allowing restperiods, and giving workers more job control, controlling psychosocial stressors

Tool and equipment design

providing proper tools that decrease force, avoid awkward postures, and encourage dynamic movement

Being aware of the causes and developing a prevention program is essential at the design or purchasing stage. Inform and train workers, encourage early reporting of symptoms, and identify and control risk factors.