



DEFINITION

Musculoskeletal disorders (**MSDs**) are conditions affecting the muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves or joints.

Main symptoms include



PAIN



SWELLING

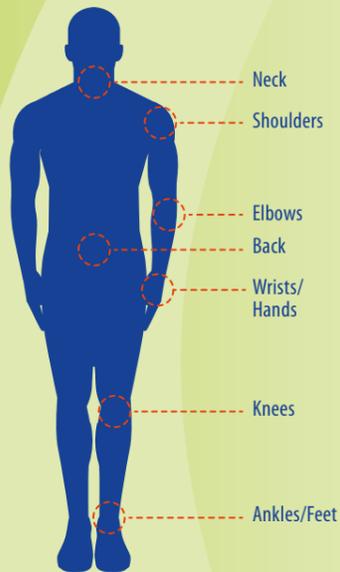


TINGLING



NUMBNESS

Parts of the body more often affected by MSDs



Factors potentially contributing to the development of work-related MSDs



Biomechanical and environmental

- Lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling loads or using tools
- Repetitive or forceful movements
- Prolonged physical effort
- Awkward and static postures
- Hand-arm or whole-body vibration
- Cold or excessive heat



Organisational

- Long working hours
- Lack of breaks or opportunities to change working postures
- Work at a fast pace / working to tight deadlines
- Repetitive and monotonous work



Psychosocial

- Lack of control over tasks and workload
- Unclear/conflicting roles
- Heavy mental / cognitive workload
- Lack of support from colleagues and/or supervisor



Individual

- Prior medical history
- Physical capacity
- Age
- Obesity/overweight

What can be done to prevent MSDs at the workplace?



Identify and prevent / reduce work-related risks factors. Give priority to actions that eliminate or at least reduce the severity of a hazard through:



Workplace design

Adapt the work to the individual



Mechanisation

Automate lifting and transport operations



Ergonomic devices / tools / equipment

Adapt to technological progress



Changes in the work organisation

Pace of work, job rotation, time to recover



Assistive devices

Use mechanical handling devices

MSDs remain the most common work-related health problem in the EU and one of the most common causes of sick leave and disability.

Early reporting of symptoms and early intervention should be encouraged.

Preventing and managing MSDs reduces the high costs that fall on the workers, employers, health services and the wider society.



The 2020-22 campaign, **Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load**, aims to raise awareness of work-related MSDs and the need to manage them and to promote a culture of risk prevention.