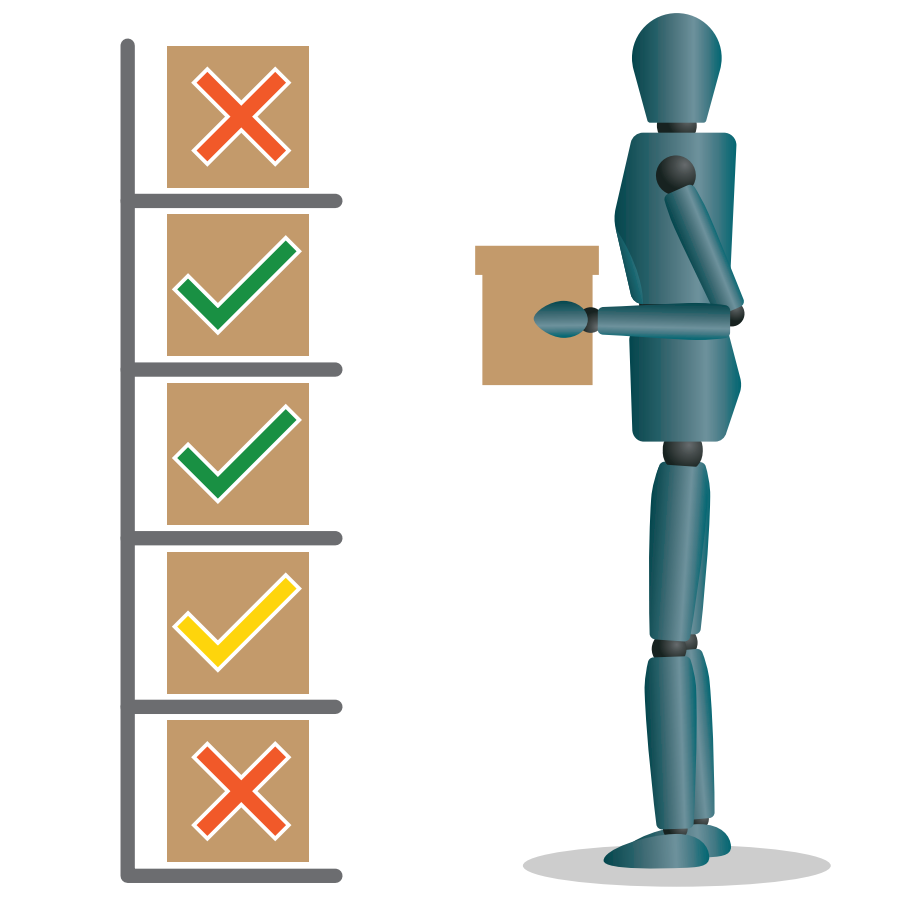


1



## Store it off the floor

- Store objects between knee and shoulder level. Waist level is best.
- Store items off the floor to minimize bending.
- Use tables, benches or stands to get work off the floor.
- Store infrequently used objects on the floor, and use carts or equipment to move heavy items.



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# Store it off the floor

## Ideas for a healthy back

*Use these ideas to improve every task at work and at home.*

- Use lift assist devices, hand trucks, or handling devices to avoid actually lifting items by hand.
- Minimize floor level work: use tables, benches, and stands to keep items off the floor.
- Place commonly handled and heavy items at waist height.
- Even under ideal conditions (load is waist high, close to your belly button and only lifted occasionally), control lifting more than 23kg (50lbs) by hand.
- Team lift: use a partner, ideally close to your size and strength.
- Bend at your hips: butt out, "proud" chest, don't round your back.
- Keep the object close to your body or between your legs.
- Changing activities and rests built into the job allow the body to recover: See MSD Tip #6.

## Did you know?

- The closer your hands are to the ground while lifting, the more likely you are to hurt your back.
- Lifting from the ground puts extra load on your spine and puts it in a weakened position...a bad combination!
- Even bending to lift a pencil from the ground can overload your back. Your upper body is heavy!
- Risk of injury is higher when lifting from the floor than from waist level, even if you bend your knees and lift with your legs.

## Improve your workplace

- Ask yourself and others, "Why does the job require lifting from the floor?" until you get to the bottom of the problem.

**What are we going to do today to keep our backs healthy while working?**

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2

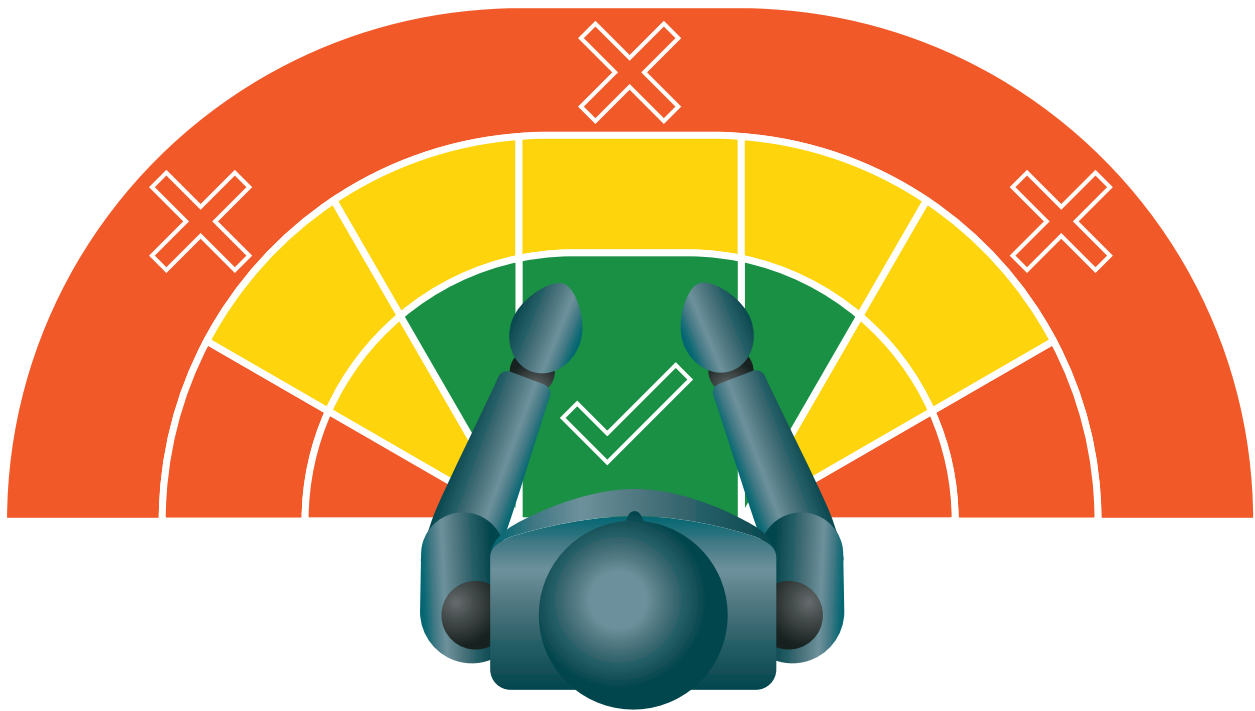
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*Whatever changes you make, check that you are not creating any new problems.*

2



## Keep it close

- Perform tasks close to your body.
- Avoid side reaches that twist the spine.
- Avoid leaning and stretching forward to reduce stress on your lower back.
- Keep common tasks close; less common tasks out of the way.



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# Keep it close

## Ideas for a healthy body

*Use these ideas to improve every task at work and at home.*

- Arrange your workspace so commonly used or heavier items are directly in front and close to your body.
- Perform the most frequent tasks closest to your body.
- Even under ideal conditions (load is waist high, close to your belly button and only lifted occasionally), control lifting more than 23kg (50lbs) by hand.
- Move unused items away to create a clutter-free and easy-to-use workspace.
- Take a minute when you start work to move things where you want them. Everybody uses things differently.
- Move your feet so your spine doesn't have to twist.
- Changing activities and rests built into the job allow the body to recover: See MSD Tip #6.

## Did you know?

- Long or frequent forward reaches can overload your back and shoulder muscles, increasing your risk of injury.
- Sideways reaches, or picking up a load to the side, can cause your back to twist.
- Twisting puts your spine in a weak position, increasing the risk of overloading your back.
- Working with your arms stretched out in front of your body fatigues your shoulders quickly.

## Improve your workplace

- Ask yourself and others, "Why does the job require reaching and twisting?" until you get to the bottom of the problem.

**What are we going to do today to keep our backs and shoulders healthy while reaching?**

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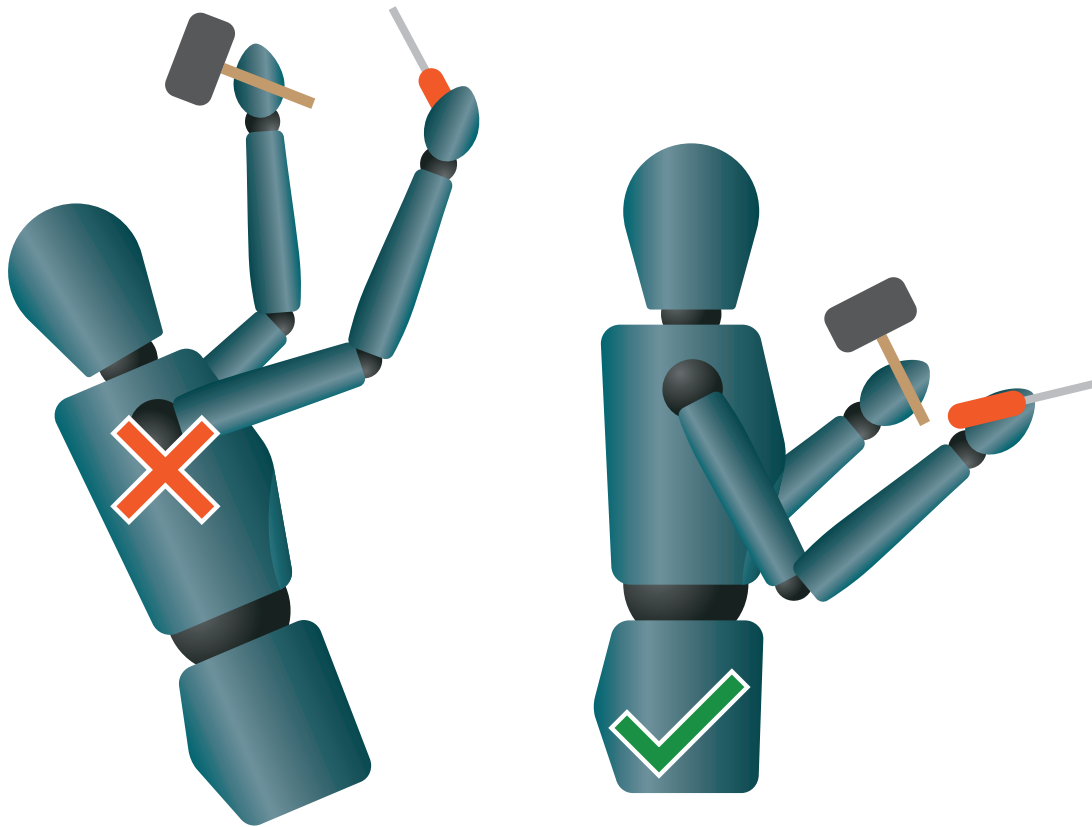
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*Whatever changes you make, check that you are not creating any new problems.*

3



## Hands below head

- Use a stool, platform, ladder or hoist so work is below head/shoulder height.
- Choose lighter tools and materials for overhead work.
- Use a bit extender for drills/screw guns.
- Find other tools/assists to limit overhead work.



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# Hands below head

## Ideas for healthy shoulders

*Use these ideas to improve every task at work and at home.*

- Stand on a raised surface or platform to reduce the actual working height. This will help your shoulders and neck.
- Some tools can use extensions to do the reaching for you.
- Use temporary clamps or fasteners to hold objects in place and allow you to use both arms for your work.
- Light-weight tools will reduce the overall load on your shoulders if you must work overhead.
- Changing activities and rests built into the job allow the body to recover: See MSD Tip #6.

## Did you know?

- Working with hands above shoulder height (overhead) can quickly fatigue your shoulder muscles and lead to fatigue, discomfort and injury.
- Holding a tool or object when working overhead makes them fatigue even faster.
- Your arms have shorter endurance, less accuracy and decreased productivity when working overhead.
- If you have to look up when working overhead, it can quickly fatigue your neck area too.

## Improve your workplace

- Ask yourself and others, "Why does the job require working overhead?" until you get to the bottom of the problem.

**What are we going to do today to keep our shoulders and necks healthy if the work is overhead?**

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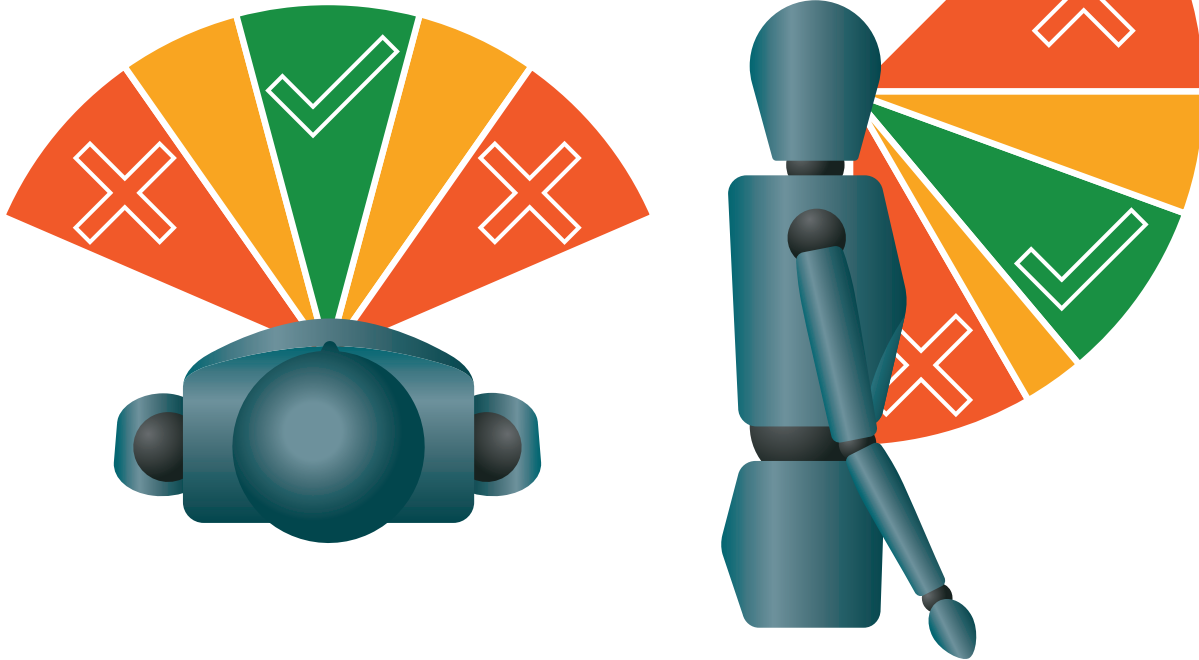
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*Whatever changes you make, check that you are not creating any new problems.*

4



## Look straight ahead

- Position your work and equipment to keep your gaze straight ahead.
- Position your work below eye level to align your vision with the task.
- Arrange your workspace so common items are centred to your body.
- Pause & stretch often to give your neck a break. Minimize continuous bending or twisting.



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# Look straight ahead

## Ideas for a healthy neck and shoulders

*Use these ideas to improve every task at work and at home.*

- Set up your workspace to look straight ahead.
- Characters or graphics on a screen can be enlarged, or the work can be better lit so you can easily see.
- Reducing glare lets you see better and helps prevent sore eyes.
- Get corrective lenses matched to your work if your vision is making you lean forward, twist or bend your neck to see.
- Position computer screens and objects requiring visual attention at or below eye level to match your vision and the task.
- Adjust the distance of your work or screen to about an arm's length from your eyes, then fine tune the distance and height for your vision and task.
- Changing activities and rests built into the job allow the body to recover: See MSD Tip #6.

## Did you know?

- Bending your neck forward or backward on a regular basis and without pauses can overload its muscles, leading to fatigue and MSD.
- Looking to one side and twisting your neck on a regular basis without pauses triples your risk of neck pain compared to looking straight ahead.
- If workers can't see their work on a computer screen clearly, they tend to lean forward, bending and twisting their neck. It's called "pigeon neck" and can lead to fatigue and pain in the neck and shoulders.

## Improve your workplace

- Ask yourself and others, "Why does the job require bending and twisting of the neck?" until you get to the bottom of the problem.

**What are we going to do today to keep our necks healthy while working?**

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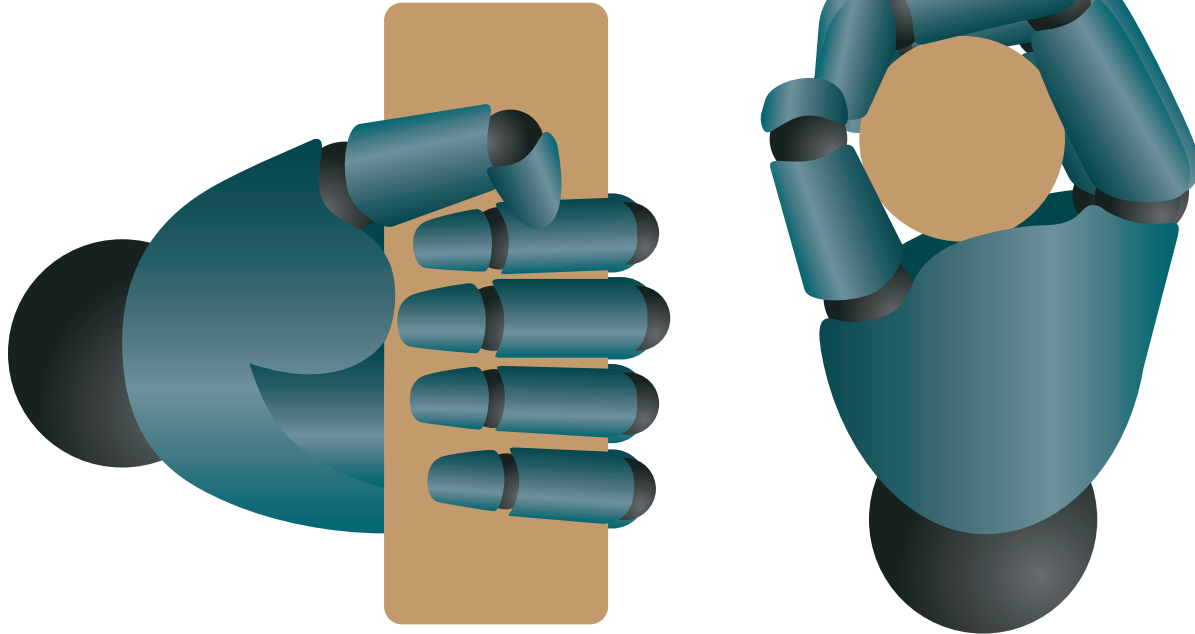
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*Whatever changes you make, check that you are not creating any new problems.*



5



## Get a (good) grip

- High force work: power grip (full hand). Low force, precision work: pinch grip.
- Choose a tool and grip that puts your wrist in a strong, natural position.
- Choosing tools: good shape for the task, fits your hand, edges don't dig in.
- Power tools with low vibration and no kickback are best.



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# Get a (good) grip

## Ideas for healthy hands

*Use these ideas to improve every task at work and at home.*

- Control repeated pinching tasks that can cause muscle fatigue and wrist disorders, especially if the pinch grip must be forceful.
- Arrange your work so your wrists are in a strong, natural position when performing gripping tasks or using tools.
- Choose a tool that matches the task. Bend the handle, not the wrist.
- Replace or modify tools that don't fit your hand, are slippery, vibrate, or dig into your hand.
- If the task requires one hand to hold an object for the other to work on it, use a tool or clamp to secure it, freeing your other hand.
- Repair or replace tools that have strong vibration or kickback.
- Changing activities and rests built into the job allow the body to recover: See MSD Tip #6.

## Did you know?

- Power grips using the whole hand are five times stronger than pinch grips which use only the fingers.
- Pinch grips work well for precision work, but fatigue very quickly during forceful tasks. Regular forceful pinch grips are the strongest predictor of hand and arm disorders.
- Working with your wrists in a strong, natural position reduces loading and fatigue in both the hands and wrists.
- A grip size that is too big or small for your hands increases the effort required to the task and increases fatigue.

## Improve your workplace

- Ask yourself and others, "Why are the workspace and tools not right for the job?" until you get to the bottom of the problem.

**What are we going to do today to keep our hands healthy while gripping?**

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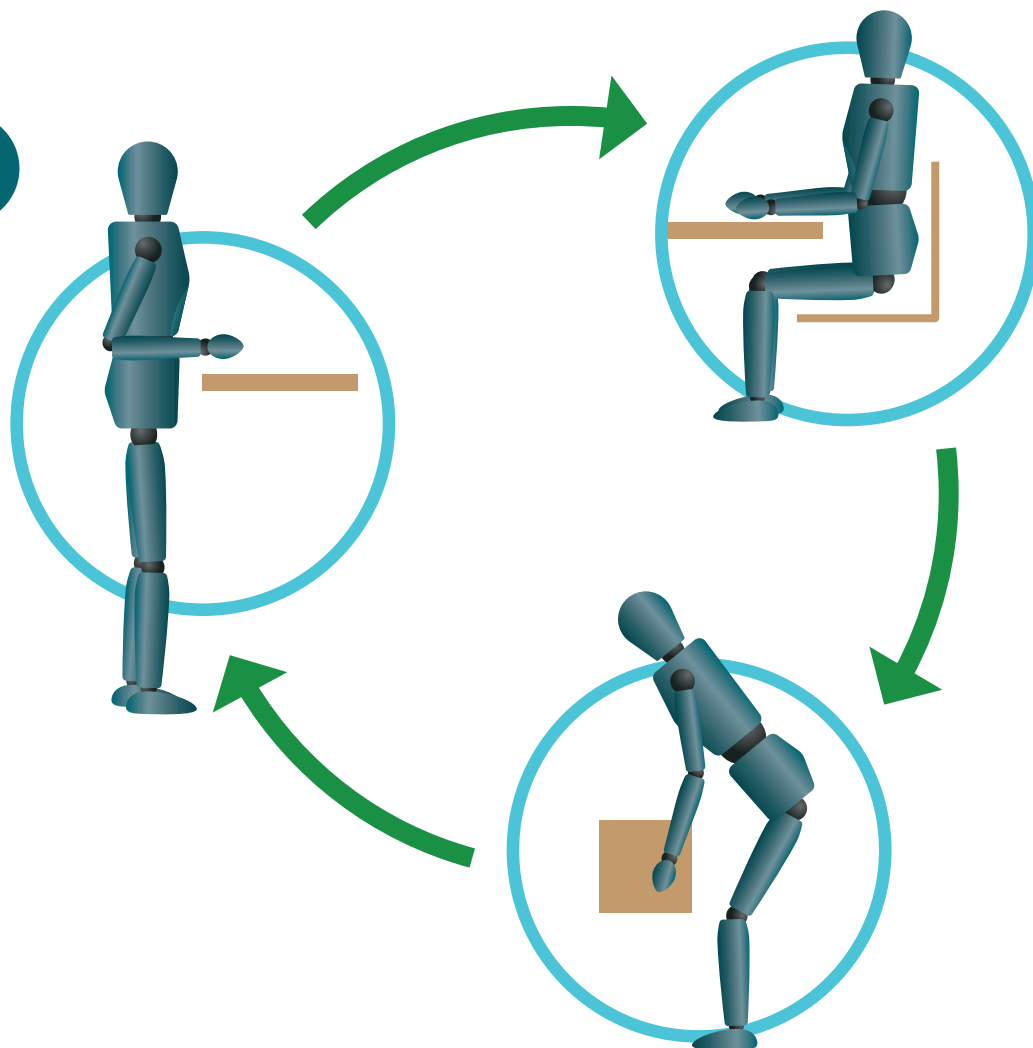
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*Whatever changes you make, check that you are not creating any new problems.*

6



## Change it up

- Include micro breaks in your tasks for body recovery and fatigue prevention.
- Rotate different tasks to provide working rests.
- Fatigue can occur during long duration efforts and repetitive tasks.
- Tasks that have MSD hazards and little recovery time have a high priority for change.



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# Change it up

## Ideas for a healthy body

*Use these ideas to improve every task at work and at home.*

- Design work so that there are working rests, micro breaks and different activities built in that allow the body to recover.
- Even a seemingly light task, like using a computer mouse, needs recovery time built in.
- Organize your day to include a range of different tasks. Switch between tasks that load different parts of the body.
- Organize work so that workers have the flexibility to vary their activities, allowing for recovery when they need it.
- Rotate your workers between tasks on a regular basis without exposing them to tasks with high MSD hazards.
- Job rotation should not be the only fix for MSD hazards. Work to eliminate or reduce the hazards themselves.

## Did you know?

- Repeated or sustained work with little chance for the body to recover can lead to fatigue and muscle, tendon, or ligament disorders.
- Repetitive work or holding one position can reduce recovery. Well-organized work can let one part of your body recover while another performs a different task.
- To help assess a task, look at whether there are recovery times or pauses built in, not only the production rate or repetitiveness.
- Changing activities and rests built into the job allow the body to recover.

## Improve your workplace

- Ask yourself and others, “Why does the job not have recovery time built in?” until you get to the bottom of the problem.

**What are we going to do today to improve recovery time for our body?**

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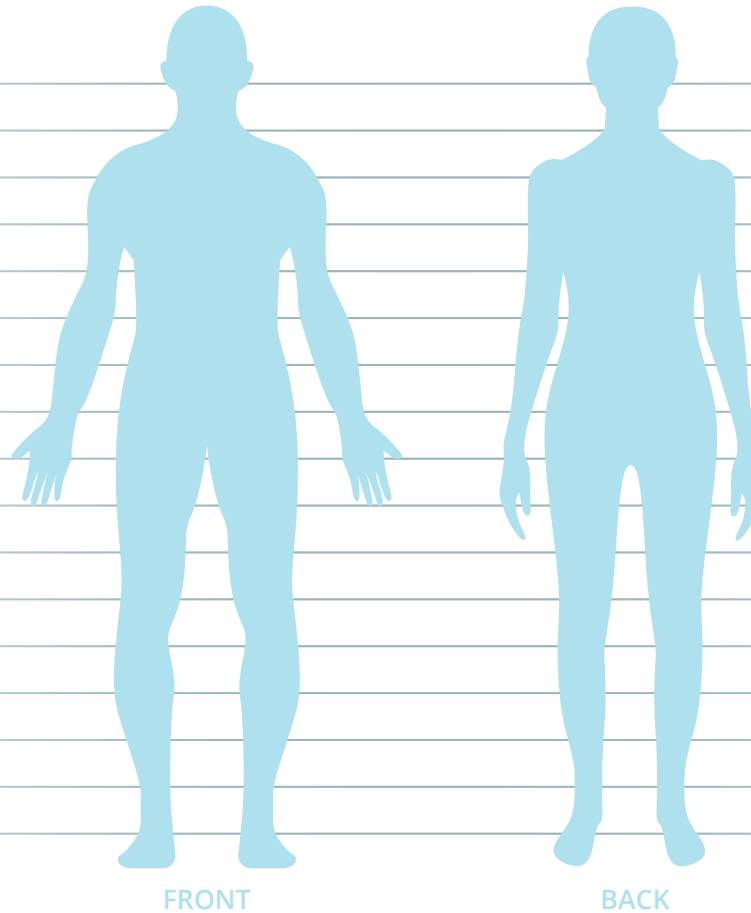
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*Whatever changes you make, check that you are not creating any new problems.*

7



## Work shouldn't hurt

- We all suffer occasional pain and discomfort at work, but work shouldn't hurt.
- Talk with your supervisor, manager or boss if you have pain at work.
- After attending to workers' pain/discomfort, take action to control MSD hazards.
- Use this diagram to help map pain and discomfort patterns in your workplace.



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# Work shouldn't hurt

## What to do if workers have pain

*Use these ideas to improve every task at work and at home.*

- Workers should talk with their supervisor, manager or business owner about their pain at work and possible causes.
- Pain that doesn't disappear before the start of work next day or continues over a weekend should lead you to speak up immediately.
- Use the discomfort diagrams with individuals or groups of workers to pinpoint areas in the body of concern.
- Work to eliminate or reduce the six hazards described in this introductory Guideline.

## Did you know?

- MSD hazards can lead to fatigue, discomfort, pain in muscles, tendons, nerves and ligaments, and disability. These hazards can also make previous MSD problems worse.
- A job that overloads the body and doesn't allow it to recover and adapt, leads to discomfort, pain and disability after weeks, months or years.
- We all suffer occasional pain and discomfort, but work shouldn't hurt.
- We all have different bodies. We shouldn't be surprised that some people develop pain and discomfort in a job with MSD hazards while another person may not.

## Improve your workplace

- Ask yourself and others, "Why do I hurt when I do this job or task?" until you get to the bottom of the problem.

**What are we going to do today to fix back pain, shoulder tendinitis, tennis elbow and other MSD at work?**

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2

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3

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*Whatever changes you make, check that you are not creating any new problems.*