

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)

What are musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are injuries and disorders of the soft tissues (muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, and cartilage), spinal discs, and nervous system. They can affect nearly all tissues, including the nerves and tendon sheaths, and most frequently involve the arms and back.

Occupational safety and health professionals refer to these disorders by a variety of names, including cumulative trauma disorders (CTDs), repeated trauma, repetitive stress injuries (RSIs), and occupational over-exertion syndrome. These painful and often disabling injuries develop gradually over weeks, months, and years. MSDs usually result from exposure to multiple risk factors that can cause or exacerbate the disorders, not from a single event or trauma such as a slip, trip, fall, collision, or entanglement.

MSDs can cause a number of conditions, including pain, numbness, tingling, stiff joints, difficulty moving, muscle loss, and sometimes paralysis. Frequently, workers lose time from work to recover; some never regain full health.

These disorders include:

- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Trigger finger
- Tendinitis
- Herniated spinal disc
- Tension neck syndrome
- Rotator cuff-syndrome
- Sciatica
- Reynaud's syndrome
- Low back pain
- DeQuervin's disease

What are musculo-skeletal disorders (MSDs)?