

Building Wellness - WORKPLACE

“Precaution is better than cure.” ~ John Lee

Agencies such as the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute of Safety & Health (NIOSH) suggest that chronic musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) such as tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, and other so-called “work-related” disorders are caused by repetitive motion and other factors related only to work activity. The use of terms like “repetitive motion injury” and “ergonomic injury” by these agencies, as well as the treatment community, is confusing and not accurate.

Strategies for the prevention of chronic musculoskeletal disorders should be founded upon the identification and elimination of all causative factors. Therefore, it’s very important for us to get this right.

If “work-related” disorders were solely caused by occupational factors, then wouldn’t it follow that all workers performing the same job demands will develop these conditions? How can we explain why one worker is healthy and another worker, doing an identical job under identical conditions, develops carpal tunnel syndrome or some other musculoskeletal disorder?

The truth is, so called “work-related” disorders typically have no single cause. These disorders are caused by many factors including lifestyle risk factors such as dehydration, malnutrition, fatigue, poor physical fitness, and poor health habits along with risk factors that also may exist in the workplace.

People are at the core of effective management and prevention of “work-place” disorders. Risk factors associated with the person, as well as the workplace, must not be overlooked. All possible risk factors that may contribute to MSD must be considered, and a comprehensive strategy to eliminate those risks should be implemented. The most effective strategy to combat workplace MSD risk factors is to create a culture of prevention.



Prevention of MSD is a shared responsibility.

The employer has the responsibility to provide a workplace free of ergonomics risk factors, while the employee is responsible for using the human body properly to do the job and for keeping their body fit for the work he/she has chosen to do.