

Most musculoskeletal or movement system disorders (MSD) are the result of a **PREVENTABLE** imbalance that affects the muscles, tendons, and nerves (the soft tissues) of our movement system. Each day we use our body; physical stress and strain sometimes produces microscopic wear and fatigue to our soft tissues. Normally, this fatigue is fully repaired by rest, circulation, and nutrition through the blood supply. When there is a balance between this fatigue and the repair process, we maintain good health. But too much fatigue, coupled with too little repair, can lead to MSD.



Risk Factors

Workplace:

- Excessive Force
- Awkward Posture
- Repetition
- Poor Body Mechanics
- Poor Ergonomic Design

Lifestyle:

- Dehydration
- Poor Nutrition
- Fatigue and Inflammation
- Poor Physical Fitness
- Muscle Imbalance
- “Wear and tear” due to the aging process

Lifestyle Causes of Movement System Disorders

- **Dehydration:** Healthy muscles are comprised of at least 70% water. Dehydration causes muscle fatigue, strain, tendonitis, and other disorders of the movement system.
- **Poor Nutrition:** Eating too many “empty” calories that don’t contain the nutrients our body needs is a primary cause of injuries and disorders of the movement system.
- **Inflammation:** Inflammation causes many lifestyle-related disorders, including heart disease and movement system disorders. Too much sugar and fat within our diet can contribute to inflammation.
- **Inadequate Rest:** Adequate amounts of rest and sleep allow for recovery and are very important ingredients for our health.
- **Poor Fitness:** Poor levels of physical fitness increases the risk of disease and injury. The lower the level of fitness, the higher the risk of injury.

When *FATIGUE = RECOVERY* → *balance is achieved.*
 When *balance is achieved* → *optimal health is maintained.*

Decrease Fatigue and Increase Recovery



Decrease **Fatigue**

- Ergonomics
- Proper Posture and Body Mechanics
- Proper Lifting Techniques
- Pre-Shift Stretching
- Reverse Stretching

Increase **Recovery**

- Proper Hydration
- Good Nutrition
- Vitamin Supplements
- Proper Sleeping Habits
- Good Physical Fitness

Here’s the good news... MSDs are absolutely preventable. MSD prevention strategies seek to reduce daily fatigue and enhance your body’s recovery process. Employing prevention strategies can have an immediate impact on the quality of your life. You can go home with more energy left to do the things that make your life more enjoyable!

Remember: You Are a Workplace Athlete!

Injury prevention is a **shared responsibility!** The company is responsible for providing a safe work environment through the ergonomics improvement process. All workplace athletes are responsible for using their body properly and keeping their body fit for work. When everyone meets their responsibilities, workplace athletes like you experience less fatigue, discomfort and painful injuries.

Here are a few best practice for workplace athletes to follow to stay injury free:

Stay involved in the ergonomics process.

The ergonomics process is part of management's commitment to limit worker fatigue and discomfort. The goal is to design the workplace to match the physical capabilities of workplace athletes like you!



Warm-up for work and use proper body mechanics.

We are ALL athletes in life, so we need to warm-up like athletes to improve our performance and to reduce risk of injury. We should also plan to work smarter... not harder! Warming up for work and using proper body mechanics will reduce daily fatigue and give you more energy left over at the end of the day!

Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water.

Staying hydrated is one of the most important things you can do for your health! Dehydration of the muscles and tendons is a primary cause of muscle fatigue, strain, and tendonitis. How much water do you need every day? Your Body Weight $\div 2 = \#$ oz. of water per day (Example: 160 pounds $\div 2 = 80$ oz. of water per day)

Eat healthy foods.

Eating healthy is one of the most important weapons that we have to fight against injury and illness. The foods we choose to eat determine what our bodies look like on the outside and how well our body functions on the inside. Eat fewer "empty" calories from dead foods, and eat more calories from living foods. Living foods include fruit, vegetables, nuts, and seeds. Living foods are harvested. Dead foods are processed and not good for you.

Get enough rest and sleep.

Rest and sleep are very important ingredients for your health. When you don't get enough sleep, increased release of stress hormones raises the level of inflammation in the body. If sleep deficits persist, we become more vulnerable to injuries and chronic diseases. Sleep experts generally agree that most adults require between 6.5-9 hours of sleep each day to maintain optimal health and safety.

Maintain your physical fitness.

There is a correlation between poor levels of physical fitness and increased risk of disease and injury. The lower the level of fitness, the higher the risk of injury. Four types of exercise should be included in your fitness plan: 1) Aerobic or cardiovascular exercise, 2) strength training, 3) stretching exercise, and 4) relaxation exercise.

Use ice or cold therapy.

Use ice/cold therapy to control fatigue and soreness after activity. Ice application should be between 15 to 20 minutes applied directly onto the skin of the affected area. An initial aching will be felt when the ice is on the skin. After 5 minutes, this should go away as the ice takes effect. Ice is a great anti-inflammatory! Never use heat after activity.

Use vitamin/mineral supplements.

Supplements are not a substitute for healthy eating, but they can fill in the gaps and help combat fatigue and inflammation. Experts recommend three daily supplements: 1) a quality multivitamin and mineral supplement, 2) a vitamin D supplement with calcium and magnesium, and 3) omega-3 fatty acids.