

**Message from the Chief Prevention Officer:**

## **ADVISORY ON REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURIES**

RSIs — or Repetitive Strain Injuries — are one of the most common work-related injuries in Ontario. Nearly four out of ten injuries requiring time off work in Ontario are a result of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), an umbrella term that includes RSIs.

Although not life threatening, RSIs can be life changing. Whether it is a store clerk stocking shelves at the local department store, or an office worker typing at a computer, RSIs can affect any worker, anywhere at any time.

These injuries mainly affect muscles, nerves and tendons and can develop because of repetitive work. This may include typing, forceful exertions like heavy lifting and carrying, or when our limbs are put in awkward positions for long periods. They can also be debilitating, at times causing constant pain and affecting mobility.

### **Here are some tips for preventing RSIs:**

Employers:

- Be sure to educate your workers and supervisors about hazards that contribute to RSIs like repetitive actions, awkward postures and forceful efforts.
- Identify MSD hazards in your workplace and implement measures to eliminate or reduce them.

Supervisors:

- Make workers aware of the potential MSD hazards in their work.
- Support safe practices for workers that reduce the risk of RSIs, such as taking regular breaks, avoiding posture extremes and getting help with heavy lifting.

Workers:

- Try to maintain a natural wrist position. Flexing and twisting your wrist repeatedly or with force can cause problems with tendons and nerves.
- Try not to stretch your joints/muscles to their extremes. Our muscles are not as strong in those positions and too much of this can lead to a strain.
- Take regular breaks to move and stretch, increase blood flow and relieve stress. When you can, change your position and posture regularly.
- Report RSIs to your supervisor.

Information to help protect you is available from the [Ministry of Labour](#) and its [workplace partners](#).

To report unsafe work practices, please contact the Ministry of Labour Health & Safety Contact Centre toll-free at 1-877-202-0008.