

Workplace Solutions to Back Pain, Shoulder Tendinitis, Tennis Elbow and Other Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD)

An Introductory Guideline *for small and micro businesses*



These documents are preliminary drafts for discussion with stakeholders. Rewriting in plain English has not yet been performed. This is a paper version of what ultimately will also be web based. Layout and graphics, web formats and navigation are still ahead.

Back pain, shoulder tendinitis, tennis elbow or other Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD) are a major cause of pain, disability and cost in your workplace.

Make **small changes** to identify and fix these problems, and **help workers** in pain now, and **avoid future pain** for all your workers. There are many easy things you can do to improve your workplace.

Better health & safety is only half the story! A workplace free of MSD hazards is a more **productive organization**, with **higher morale** and **better quality** products or services. Injured workers can return to work more easily. More **workers can do the job**. Younger and older, shorter and taller workers, and men and women can all do the job too. Injured workers can return to work.

This folder contains Six Workplace Fixes to Keep Backs, Shoulders, Necks, & Hands Happy & Health

EMPLOYERS HAVE A LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE A SAFE WORKPLACE UNDER THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT. THIS INCLUDES HAZARDS RELATED TO MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS.

MYTH BUSTERS

Dealing with MSD at work is complicated and a lot of trouble. **NOT True!**

MSD can't be prevented because they are due to "genetics" or "gardening". **NOT True!**

MSD fixes cost too much and are not practical. **NOT True!**

Preventing back pain by teaching "proper lifting" is effective. **NOT True!**

Six Workplace Fixes to Keep your Workers' Backs, Shoulders, Necks, & Hands Happy & Healthy

Included Posters

- A. STORE IT OFF THE FLOOR. Work on, or store, objects between hip and chest
- B. KEEP IT CLOSE. Store objects or work as close to your belly button as possible
- C. DON'T GET IN OVER YOUR HEAD. Work with your hands below your head
- D. DON'T GET BENT OUT OF SHAPE. Work with your head straight and level
- E. GET A (GOOD) GRIP. Objects, tools and gloves should fit your hands, keep your hands and wrists strong, and not vibrate
- F. CHANGE IT UP. A well-organized job has variety and tiny pauses that gives your body time to recover
- G. DISCOMFORT TOOL. Find tasks that may have MSD hazards

There is no specific order to the posters

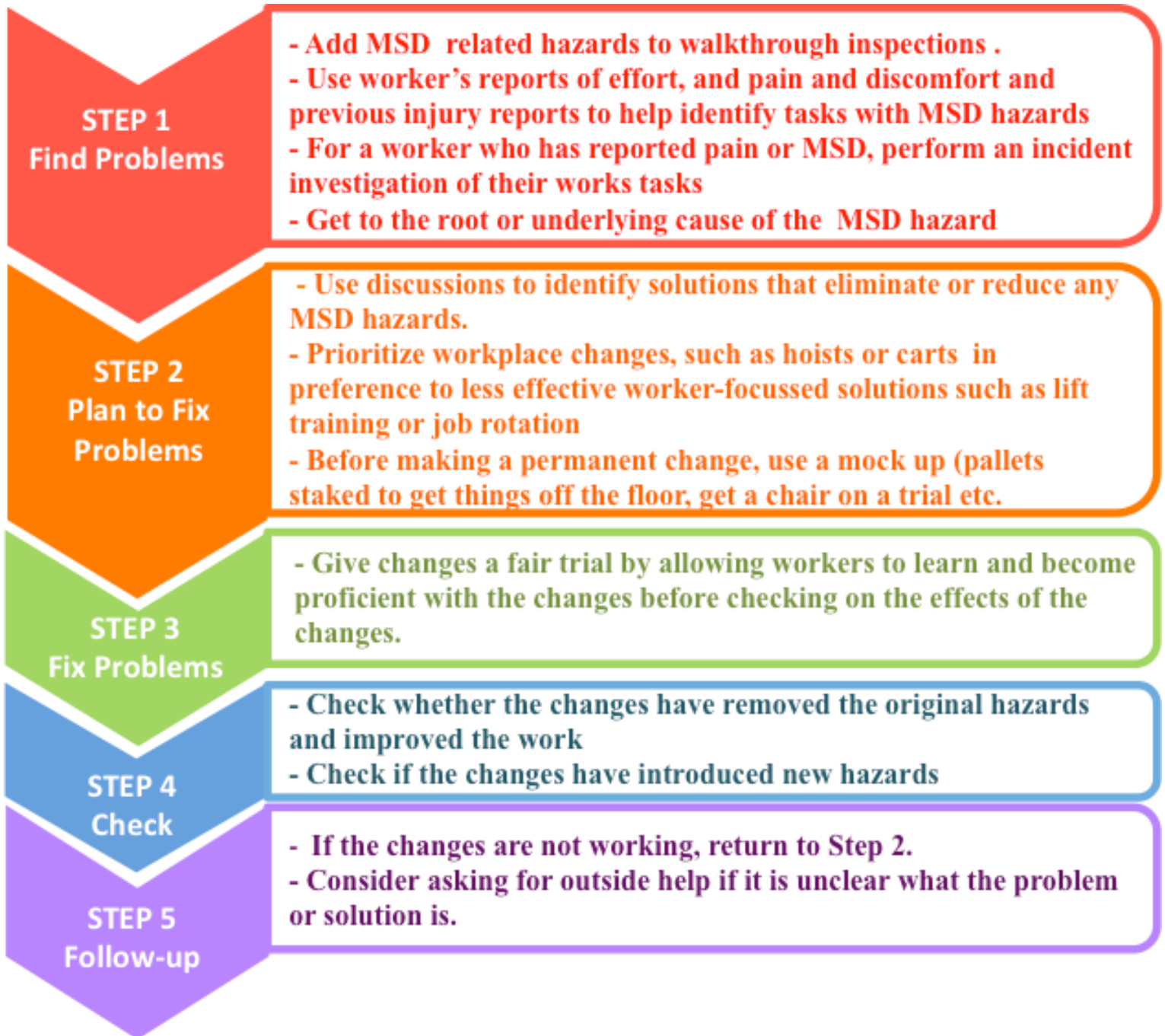
- Back area: Poster A & Poster B
- Neck Area: Poster D
- Poster F helps you identify how to vary working conditions
- Poster G helps you pinpoint the pain to help find MSD hazards
- Shoulders: Poster C
- Hands: Poster E

How to Use the Posters

- The posters give the six most common and strongest workplace hazards that can lead to MSD*. Most workplace have these hazards. MSD hazards can be found in all sizes of workplaces and in all sectors.
- Take the posters with you on workplace inspections
- Review the posters and compare them to your workplace. You may recognise some or all six workplace hazards telling you that your workplace would benefit from MSD prevention actions.
- The posters will help you get started! Identify MSD hazards and make improvements to your workplace.

- Use the posters as guides during workplace walkthroughs and inspections. On the back of the poster, write your observations and first ideas about possible fixes.
- Use the posters as a script to aid supervisors, managers or owners give safety "tool box" talks about MSD. Write suggestions for changes on the back.
- Use the posters for the lunch-room or health and safety board to alert workers to potential MSD hazards in their work and their relationship to pain and discomfort.
- Keep looking for improvements.

Show your commitment to a safe workplace by working with your employees to eliminate MSD hazards and improve health



Making a Start

Starting is the most important part of reducing back pain, shoulder tendinitis, tennis elbow and other Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD). This package will give you a good start.

Some of the ideas in this package may seem very simple, but you can substantially reduce MSD hazards by applying these ideas throughout your workplace.

The posters give you the general idea behind the fix. For example, STORE IT OFF THE FLOOR shows how to store heavy products. It's the same rule for storing heavy boxes of paper in an office, moving parts in manufacturing, or setting up stands or work surfaces for heavy tasks in construction.

Options:

- Jump straight in. Start to use the posters in your workplace inspections and “tool box” talks.
- Follow the 5-Step Process. The 5-Step Process follows the same five steps you use to fix any workplace hazard

Want More Help?

If you are already comfortable with these ideas, you can move on to more comprehensive programs and methods.

There are many websites with straight-forward fixes for MSD hazards and many groups and organizations that you can turn to for information and help.

This document is a part of the Ontario MSD Prevention Guideline. Materials written for larger businesses and more detailed resources can be found at:
www.prevent_Musculoskeletal_Disorders_Ontario.org (DUMMY WEBSITE NAME)

The Ontario Ministry of Labour has partners in many sectors who have many resources and can answer your questions
<https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/websites.php>

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has pages dedicated to the prevention of MSD <http://www.ccohs.ca/topics/hazards/ergonomic/>

The Washington State Department of Labour in the US has collected a wide range of fixes for MSD hazards
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety/SprainsStrains/ideasbank/default.asp>

One small company took the message, “STORE IT OFF THE FLOOR”, and applied it over several months to dozens of workstations and work areas. It greatly reduced the load on their workers’ bodies. Managers and workers were happy with changes made.

About this document: Surprisingly, there are very few resources to help small and micro businesses reduce MSD. This folder helps meet an important need so that workers can go home with no pain.

We value your input and suggestions: This folder is a draft version of a way for very small businesses to reduce MSD in their workplace. The materials are not final. We believe it is better to show it to people who will actually be using it before it is finished so we can get your feedback. We will keep improving it based on your comments and experiences. This paper version will also be made available on the web.

Authorship: The document has been written by the Centre of Research Expertise for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders (CRE-MSD) in collaboration with multiple workplace stakeholders.

Disclaimers: The advice provided in the process and in the hazard-recognition posters is intended to help businesses reduce MSD. The information and opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of CRE-MSD, the Ministry of Labour or the Province of Ontario.

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