



The Injury Diet: Your 6-Step Soft Tissue Injury Reduction Plan

Just as we take specific measures to reduce our waistlines—via workouts, dietary changes, better sleep—there *are* specific measures we can leverage to reduce musculoskeletal injuries (MSD) or soft tissue injuries.

Try this MSD Reduction Plan. Feel free to share this with those in your organization who are tasked as change agents for work injury prevention. Soft tissue injuries account for 35-50% of all claims, and the corporations who are not reining this in are unnecessarily losing millions annually.

- 1. Create your Injury Reduction Team.** At least one person on this team should be trained in proper ergonomics (an outside recognized ergonomics consultant is recommended if no one within your organization is specifically trained in this) and able to identify the high MSD-risk jobs.
- 2. Document the current ergonomics situation.** Record how employees are bending, lifting and handling equipment or work-related products on the job. Review the existing operating procedures, and use ergonomics assessments to see which of these tasks may present ergonomic risks.
- 3. Red flag the risk factors.** For the steps in any job duties that are MSD red flags, document a separate punch list of existing threats to MSD safety. MSD red flags would be awkward or uncomfortable static postures, repetitive motions, forceful bodily exertions, body-absorbing contact stress, or even environmental discomforts such as cold temperatures (for those working in cold storage), extreme heat and humidity, lighting or vibrations.
- 4. Strategize solutions.** Once the work duties data is gathered, your team must prioritize and scrutinize MSD threats to develop creative solutions. This can range from buying new equipment to modifying or eliminating awkward ergonomics situations.
- 5. Plan your launch.** Once you've outlined the MSD reduction solutions, it's time to create your MSD reduction launch campaign, including budgets for implementing new equipment and the correlating training materials. You will want to teach employees their new ergonomic job protocols in the ways they learn best—through practical information involving sight, sound and hands-on interaction. Breaking up the learning into manageable pieces also helps employees absorb specific areas more easily. Encouraging a climate of ongoing problem solving helps sustain ergonomics efforts.



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6. Measure your metrics. From every department head, ask for feedback on the first day of the program, and again on the 30th day of the program. Track not only the employees' sentiment towards the new ergonomics protocols, but also the retention and deployment of these new practices. Next, you will be tracking MSD claims monthly, quarterly and annually, to compare those claims costs against your initial investment (that is, your total costs for ergonomics experts, possible equipment purchases required to rectify red flag risks, employee re-education materials) to calculate your return-on-investment.

WorkWell has a proven track record of reducing soft tissue injury claims by 25-50%. For a complimentary analysis, contact us today.



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