

IS YOUR JOB A PAIN

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are the most common work-related health problem in Europe, affecting millions of workers. Across the EU 25% of workers complain of backache and 23% report muscular pains.

MSDs (ie back pain and injury, repetitive strain injury, aching joints and limbs) are mainly caused by:

- **manual handling**
- **frequent bending and twisting**
- **heavy physical work**
- **whole-body vibration.**

**LIGHTEN
THE
LOAD**

A European
Campaign on
Musculoskeletal
Disorders



IS YOUR JOB A PAIN?

The risk of MSDs can increase with the pace of work, low job satisfaction, high job demands and job stress. MSDs affect other aspects of workers' health and other health conditions can trigger MSDs. MSDs are one of the largest causes of absence from work.

Painful or tiring positions, working at very high speeds and the increasing use of machinery and computers result in high levels of work-related MSDs and stress.

Many problems can be prevented or reduced when employers comply with existing health and safety law and follow good practice.

Tackling MSDs is a priority health and safety issue for UNISON. We want to create safer and better working conditions in the UK.

UNISON continues to work with employers, employees and the government to tackle MSDs. We will address the 'whole load on the body' - which covers all the stresses and strains being placed on the body. We also look into environmental factors such as cold working conditions. Employers need to manage the retention, rehabilitation and return to work of employees with MSDs by working with the union to develop fair and robust sickness absence policies.

The price of MSDs to workers, employers and governments is huge. For the employee they cause personal

suffering and loss of income, for the employer they reduce business efficiency and for the government they increase social security and NHS costs.

You deserve to enjoy a better quality job, a better quality of life, a higher standard of living with improved health and safety and an increase in productivity and prosperity. To achieve this there must be a reduction in the number of days lost to MSDs.

Working conditions play a key role in people's health, safety and wellbeing. Your employer has a legal duty to ensure you have a safe workplace, safe working equipment and conditions. Back injuries should not be an acceptable part of the job. UNISON members have the power of Britain's leading trade union to protect them from bad working conditions. If you suffer from a back injury at work we can help and advise you. Last year UNISON and our solicitors Thompsons, won millions of pounds in compensation for our members injured at work. A unionised workplace is a safer workplace.

If you require further information or would like to join UNISON, speak to your local UNISON rep or call 0845 355 0845 (voice) or 0800 0 967 968 (textphone) or visit www.unison.org.uk

Lines open from 6am to midnight, Monday-Friday and 9am to 4pm