

Feb. 28 Is International RSI Awareness Day



Feb. 28, 2014 is the 15th International Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Awareness Day. RSIs, also called musculoskeletal injuries or disorders (MSIs or MSDs), are one of the most common types of workplace injuries.

RSIs, MSDs and MSIs are umbrella terms used to described injuries that affect tendons, muscles, nerves and joints, often in the neck, upper and lower back, chest, shoulders, arms and hands. *Examples:* tennis elbow and carpal tunnel syndrome.

RSIs can be caused by:

- Infrequent breaks
- Improper lifting techniques
- Poor posture while working (watch this animated guide on good posture in offices).

The OHS laws require employers to take steps to protect workers from ergonomics-related hazards, which are often the source of RSIs. Here are four basic steps to take:

1. Identify and assess such hazards, such as those posed by pushing and pulling materials or equipment
2. Take steps to eliminate the identified hazards, such as by lowering shelves, raising seats or making other adjustments to work stations
3. Implement safe work procedures for activities likely to

cause RSIs, such as manual materials handling

4. Train workers on how to protect themselves from RSIs, such as by using safe lifting techniques.

Get senior management on board with any changes needed to eliminate or minimize RSIs with this case study on a textile plant in Ontario that saved almost \$300,000 from its ergonomics program.

In addition, use these seven strategies to ensure that your ergonomics program is successful.