

Use International RSI Awareness Day to Address Ergonomics Hazards



February 29th is the one day of the year that doesn't repeat. (OK, technically, it repeats every four years but you get the idea.) That's why this date was chosen as International Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Awareness Day.

What are RSIs'

RSIs—also known as musculoskeletal disorders or injuries—are painful disorders affecting tendons, muscles, nerves and joints in the neck, upper and lower back, chest, shoulders, arms and hands. They're characterized by aches, pains, tingling, swelling and weakness in the affected area. Carpal tunnel syndrome is a good example of an RSI.

The factors that can lead to the development of RSIs include:

- Repetition
- Insufficient recovery time
- Forceful movements
- Vibration
- Awkward or fixed postures
- Cold temperatures
- Contact stress
- Pace of work
- Stress.

Costs of RSIs

Think RSIs don't sound like a big deal' Think again. For example, in Ontario alone, they account for more than **40%** of the lost-time injuries allowed by the WSIB—the single largest class of compensation claims. And according to Statistics Canada, **2.3 million Canadian adults** annually experience an RSI serious enough to limit their normal activities—and most of these injuries are work-related.

The estimated overall economic costs of RSIs: up to **\$26 billion** a year.

Prevention of RSIs

So what can you do to keep your workers from developing RSIs'

First, you need to understand [employers' legal obligations](#) under the OHS laws of Ontario and across Canada to protect workers from the ergonomics hazards that can lead to RSIs. Then you can [identify and assess](#) ergonomics-related hazards.

Once you've identified such hazards in your workplace, you'll need to implement measures to address those hazards. But convincing management to invest in ergonomics can be a challenge. We'll tell you how to [cut through senior management's resistance](#) and [get money](#) for ergonomics improvements.

And we give you [seven strategies](#) to make your ergonomics program a success once it's up and running.

OHS Insider Tools

Here are some tools to make it easier for you to protect workers from RSIs:

- [Office Ergonomics Risk Factor Checklist](#)
- [Manual Handling Checklist](#)
- [Model Worker MSI Symptom Survey](#)

- [Ergonomic Risk Factor Checklist](#)
- [Checklist for Evaluating Ergonomics Programs](#)
- [Form for Investigating Neck, Shoulder and Upper Back Injuries](#)
- [Form for Investigating Injuries to the Hips, Knees and Feet](#)
- [Form for Investigating Elbow, Forearm and Hand Injuries](#)

Training Materials

For materials you can use to train workers on RSIs and ergonomics-related hazards, go to [SafetySmart](#), where you'll find:

- 35 [safety talks](#) for workers on ergonomics
- 36 [articles](#)
- several [e-learning courses](#)
- and much more!