

Repetitive motion injuries - office

Introduction:

“Repetitive motion injury” is the term used when referring to injuries that result from repeating a motion over and over again. These injuries can occur from repetitive reaching, lifting, pushing, and pulling. Body parts affected can include: hands, arms, shoulders, knees and/or back.

Hazards to watch for:

- If you experience strain or stress on a joint or limb, discuss it immediately with your supervisor. Your workstation should be adjusted to fit you—not the other way around.
- Equipment not being used for its intended purpose. For example, using a left-handed mouse if you are right handed.
- Equipment not properly adjusted to fit your body. For example, proper adjustment of your chair, correct level of keyboard, etc.

Safe procedures:

- Know the correct position for the task. For example, if you are using your wrist and hand repeatedly, keep your wrists straight and grab with your whole hand, not just your fingertips.
- Your “safe lifting zone” is between your mid-

thigh and shoulder level. When you are lifting or doing other work, keep the object or tools within this zone.

- Eliminate reaching. If you’re trying to reach an overhead file stand up for a more neutral body position.
- Vary your tasks as much as possible. By using different groups of muscles, you may avoid an injury. Changing positions or changing hands will sometimes help.
- Keep loose with stretching exercises. Do a few shoulder shrugs, arm circles, wrist circles, head and neck movements and body stretches. Repeat each exercise three to five times.

In conclusion:

Repetitive motion injuries can be painful and distract you from the task at hand. They can create physical problems ranging from minor fatigue, soreness and tingling, to a permanent disability that can prevent you from earning a living. The key is to recognize early warning signs and change your workstation to fit you.