

Prepare for Work

Warm-up exercises to reduce injury

YOURSAFETY@IRP - TOOLBOX DISCUSSION

Everyone knows the benefit of stretching before exercising or playing sport... So why wouldn't you stretch before you work?

Extended periods of time spent in a static position (sitting at a desk, driving, operating machinery etc.) or undertaking repetitive movements/ tasks can cause fatigue and short term weakening of the postural muscles which can increase the risk of injury. Possible injuries include:

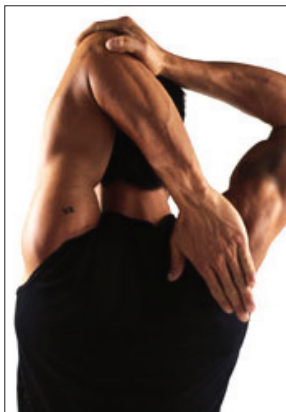
- Muscular strains or tears;
- Joint pain;
- Nerve impingement;
- Localised soreness and muscular pain.

Flexibility-based exercises reduce the occurrence of muscular injuries and prepare the body for physical activity by:

- Increasing circulation to muscles leading to improved performance;
- Creating a neuromuscular response to stretching - prepares the muscles for workloads;
- Relaxes and lengthens the muscles which reduces the chance of post-work muscular discomfort.

Note: The stretching undertaken should be specific to movement patterns required in tasks to be performed.

Here are 6 simple stretches that when held for 30 seconds each can reduce your risk of injury in the workplace:



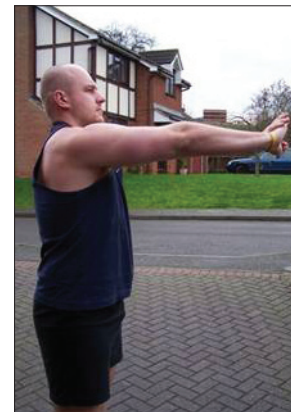
Tricep

Stand/Sit tall. Chest lifted. Shoulders down. Gently pull elbow across and behind the head until stretch felt in back of upper arm.



Chest

Clasp hand behind back. Roll shoulders back and push chest out. Straighten arms and gently raise until stretch across chest is felt.



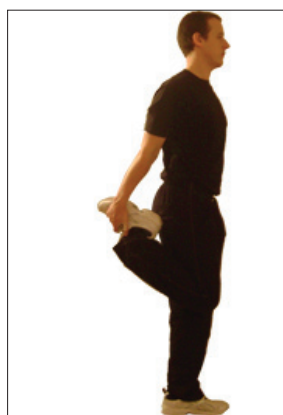
Back & Arm

Clasp hands together. Turn palms outward. Extend arms forward and spread the shoulder blades open. Stretch is felt across the upper back.



Lunge Calf

Press against wall/bar. Front knee bent and back leg straight. Back heel on ground. Both feet point forward. Stretch felt in back calf.



Standing Quad

Stand tall. Pull heel of foot toward bottom. Keep knee in line with hip. Squeeze bottom. Push hips forward until stretch is felt in front of thigh.



Hamstring

Wide stance. Front flexed towards shin. Back foot pointed forwards. Draw in abdominals. Lengthen spine. Lean forward until stretch is felt in back of leg. Hands placed on supporting leg.

Remember: 3 - 5 minutes of stretching a couple of times a day is a small investment compared to the cost of an injury.