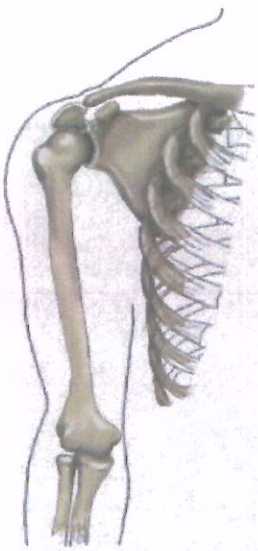
FACT SHEET

UNIFOR

Protect Your Shoulders...You Can't Work With Your Teeth!

Whose Shoulders Are At Risk of Injury?

Regardless of where we work, whether it be in auto, truck and bus assembly, parts plants, railways, aerospace, telecommunications, electronics assembly, foundries, fisheries and processing, airlines, offices, retail stores, mining, transportation, hotels and restaurants and health care... ***all*** workers are at risk from shoulder injuries.



How Do Your Shoulders Work?

Your shoulders are a delicate structure that allows flexibility or range of motion. They are also an ***engineering nightmare***. Because the shoulder has no structural support, its integrity is entirely a function of the health of the ligaments that bind it together and the strength of the muscles that provide its movement.

Why Do Your Shoulders Hurt?

Your shoulders hurt because of the poor ergonomic design of your workplace. This includes poor physical design of the workstation, layout, tools, equipment, parts, materials, environment and poor work organization. Many job designs have not considered different design requirements that exist for size, gender, dexterity, culture, nor limited abilities. In fact, most jobs are designed for healthy young males 18-24 years old.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF TROUBLE

- ⇒ Pain, numbness and/or tingling
- ⇒ Reduced range of motion
- ⇒ Swelling and/or inflammation

DON'T IGNORE THE SYMPTOMS!

BEWARE!

Your work can damage the shoulder's ligaments, muscles or the protective bursae (fluid filled sacs). The result can be pain, weakness or loss of motion. You can hurt these structures in a number of ways;

- ✓ Carrying or lifting heavy loads
- ✓ Working in awkward postures e.g. working overhead
- ✓ Working with the elbows at a distance from the body
- ✓ Working with the elbows above shoulder level
- ✓ Engaging in repetitive movements
- ✓ Exposure to Vibrations
- ✓ Pulling heavy awkward loads

Unifor and Ergonomics:

Ergonomics is the science involved in designing work so that it accommodates the worker. As a union, Unifor is at the forefront in the field of ergonomics by:

- ✓ Working with health and safety and ergonomics committees to convince employers to change the workplace, work station, tools and work organization to prevent injuries
- ✓ Bargaining ergonomic language in our contracts
- ✓ Bargaining ergonomic expertise at the National, Regional and plant levels
- ✓ Bargaining paid time away from the job to give our bodies and minds the rest they need and deserve
- ✓ Designing and providing ergonomic training for our reps and membership
- ✓ Leading the push for Ergonomic Regulations both provincially and nationally.

How to Learn More:

You can learn more about shoulders or Ergonomics by contacting:

Unifor Health and Safety Department
205 Placer Court, Toronto, ON M2H 3H9
Tel: (416) 495-6558 or
1-800-268-5763
Fax: (416) 495-6552
Email: healthandsafety@unfior.org
www.unifor.org

SS:lhcope343

FACT SHEET

UNIFOR

Protect Your Hands, Wrists and Arms... What could you do without them?

Whose Hands, Wrists and Arms Are At Risk of Injury?

Anyone working with their hands - assemblers, manual material handlers, office workers, hospitality servers, health care workers, data entry clerks or skilled trades. In short, almost anyone that works with their hands. Those who do repetitive, forceful work with their hands, wrists or arms in awkward postures are at risk. This also includes those with daily exposure to vibrating power tools and equipment powered by electricity, gas or compressed air and used by the hands.

Why Do Your Hands, Wrists and Arms Hurt?

Your hands, wrists and arms hurt because of poor ergonomic design of the workplace. This includes poor physical design of the workstation layout, tools, equipment, parts, materials and the environment. Many job designs do not consider different design requirements that exist for age, gender, dexterity, or ethnicity. In fact, most who do ergonomically design jobs do so based on old U.S. military data based on healthy and young males from 18-24 years old. Everyday many left-handed workers work with workstations and equipment designed for right handed people which can also pose a greater safety risk.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF TROUBLE

- ⇒ Pain, Numbness and/or Tingling
- ⇒ Loss of sensation to touch or pain
- ⇒ Discoloration of hands or finger tips
- ⇒ Swelling and/or Inflammation

DON'T IGNORE THE SYMPTOMS!

BEWARE!

Your work can damage the muscles, ligaments and tendons of your hands, wrists and arms. In addition, your work can impact the circulation of blood to these same areas. You can hurt these structures in a number of ways;

- ✓ Exerting large forces with your hands such as gripping, handling, pulling, pushing (such as when making electrical connections or inserting push pins)
- ✓ Working with them in poor postures, bent wrists, blind tasks with hands Working on highly repetitive tasks
- ✓ Working in cold or getting cold blow off from tools and equipment
- ✓ Working with poorly designed power tools, or improper tools for tasks
- ✓ Working with the hands, wrists and arms in constant contact with other objects causing added stress (such as working over parts to perform your job, leaning on arm or wrist rests)
- ✓ Working without sufficient rest

Unifor and Ergonomics:

Ergonomics is the science involved in designing work so that it accommodates the worker. As a union, Unifor is at the forefront in the field of ergonomics by:

- ✓ Working with health and safety and ergonomics committees to convince employers to change the workplace, work station, tools and work organization to prevent injuries
- ✓ Bargaining ergonomic language in our contracts
- ✓ Bargaining ergonomic expertise at the National, Regional and plant levels
- ✓ Bargaining paid time away from the job to give our bodies and minds the rest they need and deserve
- ✓ Designing and providing ergonomic training for our reps and membership
- ✓ Leading the push for Ergonomic Regulations both provincially and nationally.

How to Learn More:

You can learn more about your hands, wrists and arms or Ergonomics by contacting:

Unifor Health and Safety Department
205 Placer Court, Toronto, ON M2H 3H9
Tel: (416) 495-6558 or
1-800-268-5763
Fax: (416) 495-6552
Email: healthandsafety@unfior.org
www.unifor.org

SS:lhcope343

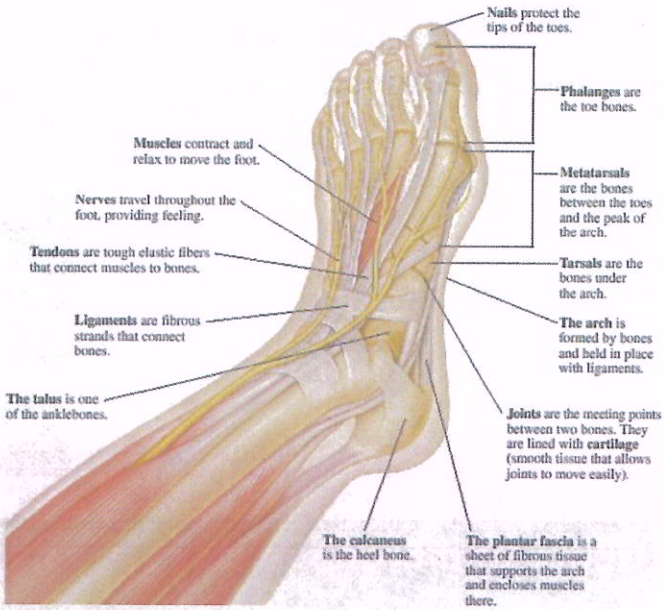
FACT SHEET

UNIFOR

Protect Your Feet... They Carry You Around For A Life Time!

Whose Feet Are At Risk of Injury?

Regardless of where you work, whether it be in auto, truck and bus, parts plants, railways, aerospace, telecommunications, electronics assembly, foundries, fisheries and processing, airlines, offices, retail stores, mining, transportation, hotels, restaurants and health care...***all*** workers are at risk from feet injuries.



How Do Your Feet Work?

The foot is comprised of bones, joints, muscles, nerves, blood vessels, tendons and layers of fascia (connective tissues). The bones of the feet form arches that are supported by ligaments and muscles. These arches contribute to the strength, stability, mobility, and resilience of the foot. During standing, walking, running or jumping, the arches serve as shock absorbers, spreading energy before it is transferred higher up the leg. When the body tissues are sufficiently stressed, they become swollen and/or inflamed. Chronic inflammation can be the result of fallen arches where the shock-absorbing quality of the arch of the foot disappears through conditions of flat foot, pronation, supination or simple overuse. Losing the arch in your feet also changes the position of the knee and hip, which makes them more vulnerable to injury from working on your feet.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF TROUBLE

- ⇒ Swelling in the feet and legs
- ⇒ Fatigue in feet, legs or whole body
- ⇒ Discolouration due to restricted blood flow from standing
- ⇒ Varicose veins
- ⇒ Arthritis in knees or hips

DON'T IGNORE THE SYMPTOMS!

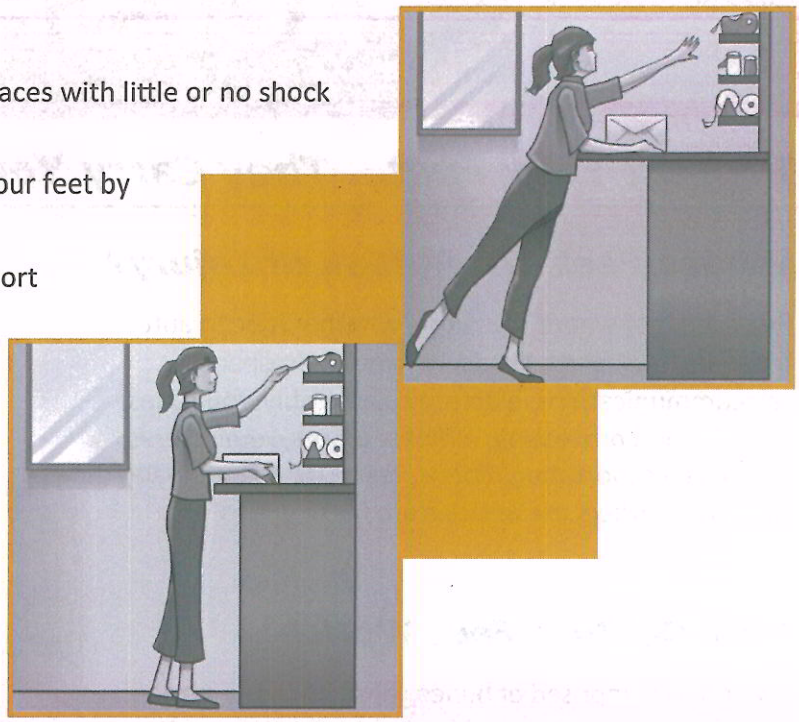
Why Do Your Feet Hurt?

Poorly designed jobs that cause workers to stand on their feet for extended periods of time can cause foot problems. Cold, hard or uneven flooring surfaces that are not covered with proper shock absorption materials such as anti-fatigue matting add to the problem. Where possible, jobs should be designed to allow for transitions between sitting and standing. By the end of the workday, many workers cannot distinguish between fatigue in their feet and legs, and whole-body fatigue. Therefore, that whole-body fatigue you are feeling could be related to working on your feet!

BEWARE!

Your work may need to be redesigned if you;

- ✓ Stand for all or most of your shift on surfaces with little or no shock absorption
- ✓ Have little or no opportunity to relieve your feet by sitting
- ✓ Have poor foot protection and arch support
- ✓ Have insufficient rest periods



Unifor and Ergonomics:

Ergonomics is the science involved in designing work so that it accommodates the worker. As a union, Unifor is at the forefront in the field of ergonomics by:

- ✓ Working with health and safety and ergonomics committees to convince employers to change the workplace, work station, tools and work organization to prevent injuries
- ✓ Bargaining ergonomic language in our contracts
- ✓ Bargaining ergonomic expertise at the National, Regional and plant levels
- ✓ Bargaining paid time away from the job to give our bodies and minds the rest they need and deserve
- ✓ Designing and providing ergonomic training for our reps and membership
- ✓ Leading the push for Ergonomic Regulations both provincially and nationally.

How to Learn More:

You can learn more about working on your feet or Ergonomics by contacting:

Unifor Health and Safety Department
205 Placer Court, Toronto, ON M2H 3H9
Tel: (416) 495-6558 or
1-800-268-5763
Fax: (416) 495-6552
Email: healthandsafety@unfior.org
www.unifor.org

SS:lhcope343

FACT SHEET

UNIFOR

Protect Your Back... You Only Have One!

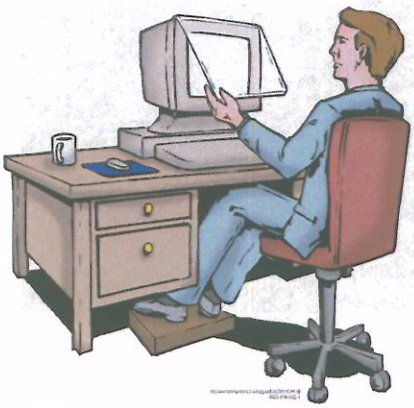
Whose Backs Are At Risk of Injury?

Regardless of where we work, whether it be in auto, truck and bus assembly, parts plants, railways, aerospace, telecommunications, electronics assembly, foundries, fisheries and processing, airlines, offices, retail stores, mining, transportation, hotels, restaurants and health care... ***all*** workers are at risk from back injuries.

How Does Your Back Work?

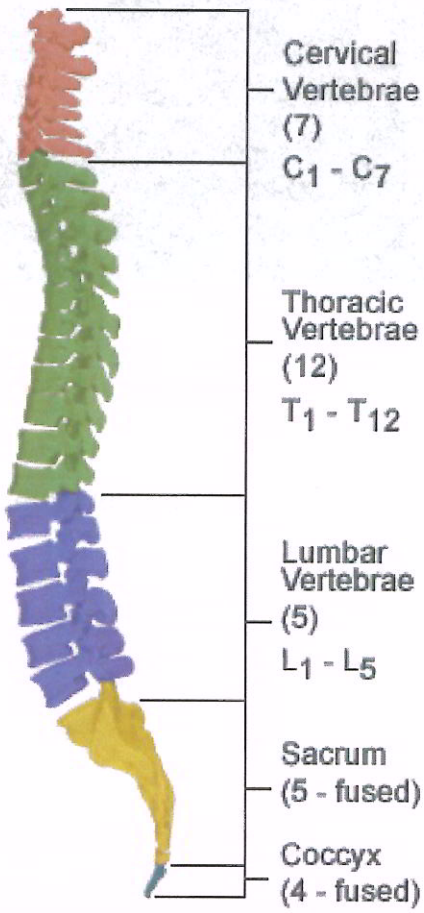
Your back is made up of 24 main bones called vertebrae. Between each are shock absorbers called discs. Ligaments bind the bones together and muscles make the entire structure move.

The back provides the ability to stand or sit upright, it stabilizes your head and, by protecting the spinal cord, it facilitates the passage of nerve signals that allow you to freely bend, lift, twist and carry.



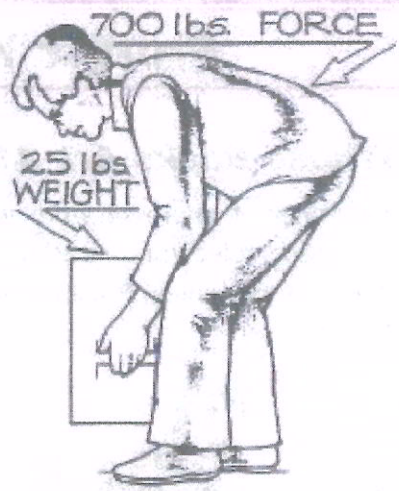
You can hurt your back;

- ✓ If you stand or sit at work for long periods.
- ✓ If you sit all day with no backrest or on a poorly designed, nonadjustable chair.
- ✓ If you sit in a chair so high that your feet don't maintain full contact with the floor.
- ✓ If you have to work in a cramped position hunched over a workstation.
- ✓ If you have to pull or push objects, particularly those which are heavy or **awkward.**
- ✓ If you have to stretch and reach repeatedly.
- ✓ If you are exposed to whole body vibration such as when driving a vehicle.



Why Does Your Back Hurt?

Damage to the vertebrae, discs, ligaments, muscles or the spinal cord and its nerves will cause back pain. You can hurt these parts of your back in a number of ways.



With respect to loading, you can injure your back if the loads;

- ✓ Are too heavy
- ✓ Are too far from your body
- ✓ Require frequent lifting
- ✓ Require twisting
- ✓ Require you to work too fast
- ✓ Have no handles

Unifor and Ergonomics:

Ergonomics is the science involved in designing work so that it accommodates the worker. As a union, Unifor is at the forefront in the field of ergonomics by:

- ✓ Working with health and safety and ergonomics committees to convince employers to change the workplace, work station, tools and work organization to prevent injuries
- ✓ Bargaining ergonomic language in our contracts
- ✓ Bargaining ergonomic expertise at the National, Regional and plant levels
- ✓ Bargaining paid time away from the job to give our bodies and minds the rest they need and deserve
- ✓ Designing and providing ergonomic training for our reps and membership
- ✓ Leading the push for Ergonomic Regulations both provincially and nationally.

How to Learn More:

You can learn more about your back or Ergonomics by contacting:

Unifor Health and Safety Department
205 Placer Court, Toronto, ON M2H 3H9
Tel: (416) 495-6558 or
1-800-268-5763
Fax: (416) 495-6552
Email: healthandsafety@unfior.org
www.unifor.org

What is Unifor Doing to Prevent RSI's?

Unifor has bargained ergonomic language in collective agreements. See some examples below:

- Joint workplace committees and processes in ergonomics that exceed minimum government regulations
- Union input into workstation and machinery design
- Ergonomics awareness training for all workers
- Workplace accommodation procedures for injured workers
- Improvements to the engineering work allocation and product design processes
- Workplace representatives to address ergonomic concerns.

RSI Prevention through the use of ergonomics creates long-term benefits for both workers and the employer.

BECAUSE WORK SHOULDN'T HURT

What else can you do to prevent RSI's?

Push for ergonomics in your workplace
Send a letter to your MPP for ergonomic regulations

Current provinces in Canada with ergonomic regulations:

- British Columbia
- Saskatchewan
- Quebec
- Alberta
- Manitoba
- Federal

UNIFOR
lesyndicat | Canada

How to Learn More

You can learn more about Ergonomics by contacting:

Unifor Health and Safety Department

205 Placer Court
Toronto, Ontario
M2H 3H9

Phone: 416-495-6558
Fax: 416-495-6552
E-mail: healthandsafety@unifor.org
www.unifor.org

SS:lhcope343

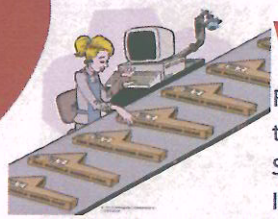
UNIFOR

International RSI Awareness Day

RSI
International RSI Awareness Day
Because Work Shouldn't Hurt

www.unifor.org

INTERNATIONAL RSI AWARENESS DAY!



What is RSI?

RSI is the abbreviated term for Repetitive Strain (sprain) Injuries. It is an umbrella term for injuries to soft tissues (muscles, tendons, and nerves) of the neck, upper and lower back, shoulders, wrists, arms and hand. Such injuries are caused by a variety of factors such as poor postures, repetition, force, temperature extremes, vibration and others.

International RSI Awareness Day

The last day of February each year is used to promote awareness of sprain and strain injuries. More than 12 countries promote RSI awareness on this day. The first RSI awareness day was on February 29th, 2000 because it was the only non-repetitive day of the year. RSI Day evolved from an email proposal by a Canadian injured worker. In non-leap years it is observed February 28.

Why Should You Care?

RSI's are a serious occupational health concern around the world. In some provinces in Canada, sprains and strains account for 50% of all occupational injuries and illnesses, and of this, nearly 30% are to the back. RSI's are a direct result of poor job design. Unifor believes raising awareness through workplace education is a vital step towards protecting workers from RSI's.

No matter what job you perform in your workplace you can possibly develop an RSI.

Symptoms and Signs of Injury

- Numbness
- Redness
- Discolouration
- Mental Strain
- Fatigue
- Tingling
- Swelling

Symptoms may act to limit the movement of limbs. Any restriction in ability to move your limbs is a key indication that something is wrong with your body. Always take symptoms seriously. Both the worker and employer suffer a variety of health and economic effects as a result of workplace injuries. Injured workers may suffer work restrictions, permanent disabilities, loss in earning power and loss in quality of life. Employers experience significant operational effects through increased injuries such as higher insurance rates, loss of worker expertise, reduced quality, production problems, more scrap, and increased warranty claims resulting in economic loss. Signs of injury include:

- Increased medical visits
- Increased worker complaints
- High turnover on jobs
- Reduced quality
- Reduced performance in work and home life

What can you do if you are at risk or develop a RSI?

Report problems to your Supervisor, First Aid and your Unifor Health & Safety and Workers' Compensation Reps.

What is Unifor doing to prevent RSI's?

Unifor has bargained ergonomic language in collective agreements. See some examples below:

- Joint workplace committees and processes in ergonomics that exceed minimum government regulations
- Union input into workstation and machinery design
- Ergonomics awareness training for all workers
- Workplace accommodation procedures for injured workers
- Improvements to the engineering work allocation and product design processes
- Workplace representatives to address ergonomic concerns

RSI Prevention through the use of ergonomics creates long-term benefits for both workers and the employer.