

Help yourself prevent and manage discomfort, pain and injury

There are seven groups of Contributory Factors that may lead to discomfort, pain or possible injury. Address all of the contributing factors to help yourself prevent and manage discomfort pain and injury.

Individual Issues

Contributory Factors – I am not feeling very well at the moment due to... lack of sleep, eating poorly, not drinking enough water, not exercising enough, smoking, too much alcohol.

Possible Solutions

- Take control of your life. Try to get rest when you can, exercise regularly, eat and drink properly. Work on changing any bad habits you may have adopted.
- Join a gym, walking group, or some other appropriate activity to encourage exercise and good living.

Psychosocial Issues

Contributory Factors – There are issues concerning me (either at work or at home) such as relationships with others, money, health, children and so on.

Possible Solutions

- See if your work has an Employee Assistance Programme or someone to assist you. Can you talk to a manager, doctor, citizen's advice bureau, bank, marriage counsellor or similar, and see if the problem can be resolved?
- Try to prioritise your concerns and deal with them step by step.

Work organisation

Contributory Factors – I don't take regular breaks, I have to work long hours or do shift work, the 'flow' of my work is disorganised, or there are peaks and troughs in the amount and/or difficulty of the work that I do.

Possible Solutions

- Take your regular breaks to let your body recover from work done, or rotate to other jobs so that you are using your body in a different way.
- Talk to your supervisor or manager about deadlines if you are finding them difficult to meet.
- Talk to your supervisor or manager about other ways to make your work easier, for example, ways to avoid peaks and troughs in the work that you do, and making sure you have time to take breaks.

Work layout and awkward postures

Contributory Factors – The area that I work in is poorly laid out and/or I have to work in uncomfortable positions.

Possible Solutions

- Use the HabitAtWork software (www.habitatwork.co.nz) to address workplace layout and postures.
- Try to identify what is troubling you the most. Discuss this with your manager or supervisor to see what improvements can be made.

Help yourself prevent and manage discomfort, pain and injury *continued ...*

Task invariability

Contributory Factors – My work is repetitive and I do the same thing all the time.

Possible Solutions

- See if there are ways that your work can be varied. Can you: break up computer work with filing, mix work that requires a lot of thought with some physical work, change the positions that you work in regularly?

Load/Forceful movements

Contributory Factors – I am required to use a lot of muscular effort in the job that I do; or, I find the work that I do physically demanding.

Possible Solutions

- Try looking at whether other equipment could be used to assist your work. Could your loads be altered to make them easier to move? Can you rearrange your workplace to make life easier?
- You may want to bring this up with your supervisor or manager and look at other ways your work could be made less physically demanding.

Environmental issues

Contributory Factors – The place I work in is too hot, cold, draughty, damp, bright, dim, etc.

Possible Solutions

- Can you move your work so that you are more sheltered or more comfortable?
- Talk to your manager or supervisor about what changes can be made to make your work environment more comfortable.