



RSI Day, February 28, 2025

What is RSI Day?

Every year, on the last day of February, the occupational health and safety community comes together to raise awareness of **R**epetitive **S**train **I**njuries, also called musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

RSIs are a family of injuries affecting tendons, tendon sheaths, muscles, nerves and joints. They cause persistent or recurring pains, most commonly in the neck, shoulders, forearms, hands, wrists, elbows, and lower limbs. The injuries can be caused by or in combination with force, rapid movement, overuse, static loading, excessive strain, uncomfortable positioning of limbs or holding one's posture in an unnatural, constrained or constricted position.



Why do we raise awareness about RSIs?



What are repetitive strain injuries (RSIs)?

Repetitive strain injuries (RSIs) are injuries that happen when you do the same motion over and over, causing stress to your body. These injuries usually affect parts of your body like muscles, nerves and tendons. Common places for RSIs are your wrists, elbows, neck and shoulders. They can cause pain, stiffness, numbness or weakness in these areas. RSIs are often seen in people who type a lot, use tools repeatedly or do other jobs that require the same movements many times.

Who is affected?

Once common in sports, RSIs now increasingly affect workers across many fields, from office clerks to manual labourers. These often overlooked injuries can lead to serious, sometimes permanent damage if not addressed early.

Causes

There are several types of repetitive strain injuries:

- Rapid movement injuries, caused by repeated rapid movement
- Forceful movement injuries, caused by strong muscle exertion
- Static injuries, caused by maintaining fixed positions without support.

RSIs are often caused by the way we work. For instance, a maintenance worker might experience pain from using force repetitively and working in awkward positions, while an office worker might develop RSIs from using a non-ergonomic keyboard and sitting without proper wrist support.

In Ontario, RSIs account for about 50% of all lost-time days and 40% of all lost-time claims approved by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. Unfortunately, far too many RSIs are not recognized or reported as workplace injuries. Many workers are unfamiliar with RSIs, so everyday aches and pains are overlooked, and no connection is made between the injury and the workplace.

Aches and pains are an indication that a serious injury may be developing. If the causes of the injury are not eliminated, or the worker is not moved from the injuring job or task immediately, the damage can be permanent and irreversible. Sometimes the injury is crippling, leaving the worker in pain and possibly immobile for life.

Because repetitive strain injuries have numerous causes affecting a variety of areas, eliminating them demands a comprehensive prevention program. The cornerstone of such a program must be to make the job fit the person rather than make the person fit the job.

Under Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, employers have a general duty to identify, assess, and control or eliminate exposure to all hazards, including those that can contribute to the development of RSIs and MSDs. Further, the employer must ensure that workers receive training on the hazards that may cause an injury. Workers' training could include instruction and information on how to carry out repetitive or physical tasks safely, the proper use of tools and equipment, manual lifting procedures, maintaining an ergonomically safe workstation, taking rest breaks, and early recognition of injury.



How can I participate in RSI Day?

Here are four ways for you to get involved in preventing RSIs and MSDs at work.

Awareness

- Download, share and post the CUPE fact sheet on Repetitive Strain Injuries ([English/French](#))
- Download, share and post these posters and infographics from CCOHS ([English/French](#))
- Perform a basic self-assessment.
 - Download the [Pain Point App to your mobile phone](#). The Pain Point app is a first-step assessment that will help you recognize the signs of injury and take action for prevention.



Register for a workshop

The Workers Health and Safety Centre (WHSC) is currently offering ergonomics training at a discounted rate of \$40 + HST/participant/program (normally priced at \$75-\$120/program). Register here:

<https://www.whsc.on.ca/Training/Training-Registration/Ergonomics-Training>

Attend a webinar

During the month of February, the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) is hosting a series of webinars related to RSIs and MSDs. All times session times are 10 am -12 pm (EST).

	Week 1 - Clinical Insights & Applying New Technology Friday, February 7	Week 2 - Reality Check 2025 - Hazard Mitigation Friday, February 14	Week 3 - Key Topics in Occupational Ergonomics 1 Friday, February 21	Week 4 - Key topics in Occupational Ergonomics 2 Friday, February 28
Session 1	Osteoarthritis of the Carpometacarpal Joint (Thumb)	Heat Stress Management: A new toolkit for Ontario Workplaces	Creating and Fostering Inclusive Work Environments to Prevent MSDs Among Older Workers	Visual Ergonomics: The Relationship Between Vision and Office Ergonomics
Session 2	Osteoarthritis of the Hip	Ergonomics and Manual Materials Handling: Enhancing Safety and Efficiency	Comparison of Rapid Entire Body Assessment (REBA) and Rapid Upper Limb Assessment (RULA)	Review of the Quick Exposure Check (QEC) Reference Guide
Session 3	Implementing Markerless Motion Capture Technology for Ergonomics Assessments			

Register for this year's webinars and see past RSI Day webinars at:

<https://www.ohcow.on.ca/events/repetitive-strain-injury-rsi-day/>

Make the case for RSI/MSD prevention at your workplace

The WHSC has developed a series of fact sheets to help you make the case and take steps to prevent injuries caused by poor ergonomics.

- [The economics of ergonomics](#)
- [Participatory Ergonomics](#)
- [Diagnosing and removing MSD pain in an acute care hospital](#)
- [Setting a higher ergonomic standard at an Ontario university](#)

Where can I learn more about RSIs?

Find out more about RSIs and MSDs from the following resources and websites

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)

- Repetitive Strain Injuries – Facts Sheet ([English/French](#))
- Hazard Prevention Program ([English/French](#))
- Hazard vs Risk ([English/French](#))

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)



- International Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Awareness Day ([English/French](#))

Centre for Research and Expertise – Musculoskeletal Disorders (CRE-MSD)

- [MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario](#)

Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW)

- [Workplace Ergonomics](#)

Workers Health and Safety Centre (WHSC)

- [Manual Material Lifting: a pain in the neck, back ...](#)
- [MSDs of the Upper Body: from recognition to resolution](#)
- [Patient Lifting: handle with care](#)
- [Prolonged Standing: taking the load off](#)
- [Sitting on the Job: static load, chronic pain](#)