[IMAGE]

# The Continuing Saga: Work-Related Back Pain

Is your work repetitive? Do you exert your hands for a prolonged period of time? Are you frequently lifting, pushing, pulling or carrying heavy objects? If so, your working conditions may be exposing you to an increased risk for musculoskeletal problems. In 1994 alone, there were 705,800 musculoskeletal cases involving days away from work.

You’re probably well-aware of the relationship between workload and low back pain (LBP). In recent months, we’ve reported on several studies documenting risk factors for LBP -- and there’s more. In a recent study published in *Spine*, a working population was observed to identify high-risk factors for injury to the musculoskeletal system. The objective of the analysis was to determine to what extent body rotation and lifting are factors for work-related injuries. A high risk of LBP was observed for workers whose work involved rotation of the trunk (literally, twisting or turning the upper body) at a minimum of 60 degrees of flexion for more than 5% of working time, and for workers who worked with the trunk in a minimum of 30 degrees of rotation for more than 10% of the working time. The same was true for workers who lifted a load of at least 25 kilograms (about 55 lbs.) more than 15 times per working day.

If your work environment and/or job responsibilities put you at risk for back pain or other repetitive-motion musculoskeletal injuries, talk to your doctor about ways to limit your risk. For more information on back pain, visit http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/backpain.html.

*Reference*: Hoogendoorn WE, Bongers P, de Vet HCW, et al. Flexion and rotation of the trunk and lifting at work factors are risk factors for low back pain. *Spine* 2000: Vol. 25, No. 23, pp 3087-3092.

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