

SOS FROM OOS

What is OOS?

OOS stands for Occupational Overuse Syndrome. This is term given for a range of conditions resulting from manual handling.

Are you at risk?

Any work that requires the repetition or forceful movements (all very common in cleaning) has an OOS risk.

How will I know if I have OOS?

Symptoms of OOS include burning pain, tingling, numbness and swelling in the joints and muscles. Symptoms can be different for each person. When doing repetitive or forceful work it can make your muscles feel sore. This is common, especially for new workers. However, pain normally stops with rest.

If you are constantly in pain whilst cleaning and you are struggling to move body areas such as the neck, back and shoulders you could possibly be at risk of OOS.

What should be done?

Your employer has a legal obligation to provide a safe work place.

Supervisors should be trained in OOS and be able to talk to you about workplace pain from doing repetitive work. Talking with your supervisor, you can find better ways of doing your job that will prevent OOS.

Your company workplace health and safety officer (WHSO) or any workplace health and safety representative (WHSR) should be trained in OOS and be able to talk to you on how to prevent OOS.

Talking to your WHSO or WHSR about any pain that you are experiencing from repetitive or forceful movement allows them to monitor OOS risks within the company. This monitoring supports your WHSO or WHSR when discussing the need for improvement of workplace health and safety issues with your employer.

You should receive induction training on manual handling techniques.

This includes receiving training when you have to perform a new task or a different way of performing a manual task or when you need to use a new type of machinery.

As a worker, you must follow the companies safe working procedures, use machinery correctly, bend from the knees and wear any personal protective equipment that is required for your work tasks.

What are some useful ways to prevent or control OOS?

- ✔ Try to change your order of work to avoid using the same muscles continuously.
- ✔ If doing tasks that require repetitive motions, change your body movement, move from side to side and or change hands frequently.
- ✔ When you start to feel pain from doing a continuous task such as fine work (e.g. scrapping), take a quick break and shake your body out and or even do neck rolls.
- ✔ When doing tasks that require force avoid tensing up, rather try to relax your shoulder and arm muscles.
- ✔ When mopping, move the mop with your whole body, not just your arms and shoulders and move from side to side.
- ✔ Use machinery properly by holding, pushing or grasping at the designed handles. Where there are two hands use both hands. For example, when guiding a polisher, use both hands steady positioned with one hand on each handle grip.
- ✔ Seek help lifting large, clumsy or heavy items when clearing an area or taking out bins.
- ✔ Make use of mechanical lifting devices that are available such as trolleys.
- ✔ Never lift a wheelie bin, rather guide with the use of the wheels.
- ✔ Bend at the knees and not at the back.
- ✔ If it is necessary to work on your knees, avoid bending the back, rather stoop down and make use of kneepads to protect the knees.
- ✔ Most importantly, always tell your supervisor if you are experiencing any pain or continuous muscle pain from working.

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