

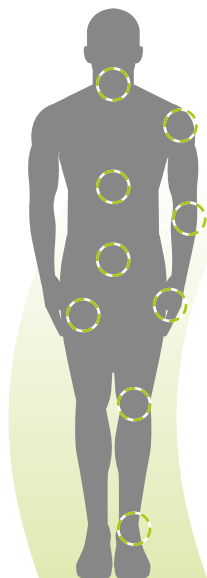


*Musculoskeletal disorders are one of the main causes of sick leave and early retirement in Europe.*

## What are MSDs?

Work-related MSDs are impairments of bodily structures, such as muscles, joints, nerves and bones, that are caused or aggravated primarily by work. They mainly affect the back, neck, shoulders and upper limbs, but can also affect the lower limbs.

Most work-related MSDs are cumulative disorders, resulting, for instance, from repeated exposure to high-intensity loads over a long period of time. However, work-related MSDs can also be acute traumas, such as fractures, that occur during an accident.



**The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)** contributes to making Europe a safer, healthier and more productive place to work. Set up by the European Union in 1994 and based in Bilbao, Spain, the Agency researches, develops and distributes reliable, balanced and impartial safety and health information, networking with organisations across Europe to improve working conditions.

EU-OSHA also runs Healthy Workplaces Campaigns, backed by the EU institutions and the European social partners, and coordinated at the national level by the Agency's network of focal points. The 2020-22 campaign, **Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load**, aims to raise awareness of work-related MSDs and the need to manage them and to promote a culture of risk prevention.

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Safety and health at work is everyone's concern.  
It's good for you. It's good for business.

## Healthy Workplaces LIGHTEN THE LOAD



[www.healthy-workplaces.eu](http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu)



# The campaign

## Managing work-related MSDs

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are detrimental to people's quality of life and are one of the main causes of sick leave and early retirement, having a negative impact on businesses and economies. Despite significant efforts to prevent them, work-related MSDs remain the most common work-related health problem in Europe.

With the right approach, work-related MSDs can be prevented. Tackling MSDs not only protects individual workers, but also improves business competitiveness, by reducing sickness absence and increasing productivity, and also reduces the burden on national health systems.

The campaign has the following objectives:

1. raise awareness of work-related MSDs;
2. promote risk assessment and management of MSDs;
3. demonstrate that MSDs are an issue for everyone — in all types of workplaces and sectors;
4. improve knowledge of new and emerging risks in relation to MSDs;
5. emphasise the need to reintegrate and retain workers with chronic MSDs and how this can be done;
6. encourage the exchange of information and good practices among relevant stakeholders.

# Who can take part?

All interested individuals or organisations — at both European and national levels, of any size and from any sector — are encouraged to take part in the campaign, in particular:

- employers, managers, workers and OSH representatives in the public and private sectors;
- EU-OSHA's focal points and social partners and their networks;
- sectoral social dialogue committees;
- policy-makers;
- the OSH research community;
- labour inspectorates and their associations;
- public health community;
- education sector (primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational);
- product designers and industrial designers;
- the media.



# How can you get involved?

- Raise awareness by disseminating campaign materials;
- organise workshops or other activities;
- promote tools and resources for managing work-related MSDs;
- share good practices for prevention;
- participate in the Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards;
- take part in the European Weeks in October 2021 and 2022;
- become an official campaign partner or media partner.

# Further information and resources

Visit [www.healthy-workplaces.eu](http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu) for more information and various resources to help you promote and support the campaign, for example:

- the campaign guide;
- reports, info sheets and OSHwiki articles;
- the campaign toolkit and other promotional material;
- tools, infographics, audio-visual materials and good practice guidance;
- Napo videos and training resources.

Follow us on social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)) and share our posts.

Keep up to date with the latest campaign news through our campaign website (<https://healthy-workplaces.eu>).

*With an integrated approach and by promoting a culture of prevention involving both workers and employers, many cases of MSDs could easily be prevented or managed.*

## Key dates

### Campaign launch

October 2020

### European Weeks for Safety and Health at Work

October 2020, 2021 and 2022

### Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Exchange event

October 2021

### Results of the Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards

April 2022

### Healthy Workplaces Summit

November 2022

