

Introduction

Lower limb disorders can affect the hip, thigh, knee, calf, ankle or foot. They include joint and soft tissue problems and can be caused or made worse by work. They may be either due to an acute injury or develop gradually over a period.

Factors that can cause or impact existing upper limb pain include heavy lifting, repetitive and/or forceful movements, poor ergonomics and work that involves a lot of standing, walking or climbing.

What can I do?

Try to identify what factors seem to cause or irritate symptoms. Certain movements or tasks will probably cause more discomfort than others.

- Try to avoid work that involves forceful or repetitive movement and employ job rotation where it cannot be avoided.
- Simple exercises could help to alleviate symptoms if undertaken before starting work & after breaks.
- Researching targeted exercises for specific musculoskeletal conditions can help with recovery.
- Consider asking your employer for training or an ergonomic review of your work or process.
- Over-the-counter medication might help with short term symptoms – consult your local pharmacist.

Simple Exercises for easing knee pain



What if it doesn't improve or gets worse?

If self-care doesn't help or your symptoms are getting worse, then you should consider:

- Stopping self-care exercises if it seems to be making your condition more painful.
- Reporting it to your employer and/or Occupational Health Practitioner.
- Requesting a temporary redeployment to another role or area as a short-term measure (this might not be possible).
- Seeking review with your GP or a Physiotherapist.

If you have been given an exercise or treatment programme by a healthcare professional, you should follow it closely for the time frame specified. Ensure that you follow Manual Handling guidance.

You may be asked to keep a symptom diary to help the practitioner identify which aspects of your job may be affecting your condition. You may be asked to record pain using a simple scale along with other factors such as weights lifted, frequency of movement, force applied etc.

In the unlikely instance that an exercise programme seems to be making things worse, stop and contact your provider for further advice.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/muscle-bone-and-joints/leg-and-foot-problems-and-conditions>

A copy of this and associated leaflets may be downloaded from:

<https://mohs.co.uk/resources/>

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Lower Limb Pain & Work A Guide for Employees



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