



Typical Physical Limitations for Common Injuries

This document provides a list of typical limitations for common physical injuries.

Neck	Shoulder	Elbow/Forearm	Wrist/Hand
Ensure - The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks Limit - Activities with arms above shoulder level, including reaching down - Activities with lifting and carrying to light or medium loads - Hanging weights - Ladder climbing Avoid - Lifting and carrying with arms above shoulder level - Extremes of looking up, down, or over the shoulder, especially if sustained for more than a few seconds	Ensure - The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks Limit - Climbing ladders - Activities using arm above shoulder level, including reaching down - Activities which require lifting and carrying to light or medium loads Avoid - Holding the arm outstretched for periods especially while holding weights and applying force - Lifting and carrying with arm above shoulder level	Ensure - The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks Limit - Repetitive or sustained gripping, especially where high forces are required - Repetitive elbow bending - The total time spent keyboarding or driving - The use of impact tools (including power tools and hammers) Avoid - Hanging weights - Forearm rotations - Pressure on the elbow	Ensure - The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks Limit - Repetitive gripping, especially where high or sustained forces are needed - Lifting and carrying to light or medium loads - The total time keyboarding or driving Avoid - Extreme postures of the wrist, especially with force

Low Back	Knee	Ankle
Ensure • The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks • The worker can change position between walking, standing, and sitting Limit • Walking on uneven ground • Lifting and carrying to light or medium loads, depending on frequency and postures Avoid • Jarring • Repetitive bending • Long periods of static standing or sitting • Extreme bending of the back • Twisting of the back	Ensure • The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks • The worker can occasionally elevate the knee • The worker can frequently change position between standing, walking, and sitting Limit • Walking on uneven ground Avoid • Long periods of standing or walking • Deep squatting, kneeling, or crouching • Pivoting of the knee • Participating in activities requiring bracing, balancing, or running • Stair use or ladder climbing	Ensure • The worker can occasionally elevate the ankle • The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks Limit • The use of stairs Avoid • Long periods of standing or walking • Walking on uneven ground • Climbing ladders • Deep squatting and crouching • Activities requiring balancing, bracing, or running

These typical physical limitations are guidelines to help develop an appropriate stay-at-work or return-to-work plan.

Strength categories for handling loads

National Occupational Classification (NOC) is the nationally accepted reference on occupations in Canada and provides a standardized framework for definitions such as pulling, pushing, lifting and/or moving objects during the work performed.

The NOC defines strength used in handling loads (e.g. pulling, pushing, lifting and/or moving objects during the work performed) as follows:

Limited: Work activities involve handling loads up to 5 kg

Light: Work activities involve handling loads of 5 kg but less than 10kg

Medium: Work activities involve handling loads between 10 and 20 kg

Heavy: Work activities involve handling loads more than 20 kg