

Signs and Symptoms of Discomfort

Stages of Strains/Sprains

Stage 1

- Discomfort for weeks/months
- Reversible
- Improves with a change in activity


Stage 2

- Discomfort for months/years
- Daily activities become difficult to perform
- Symptoms occur more quickly, last longer

Stage 3

- Symptoms always present
- Sleep disrupted
- Daily activities affected

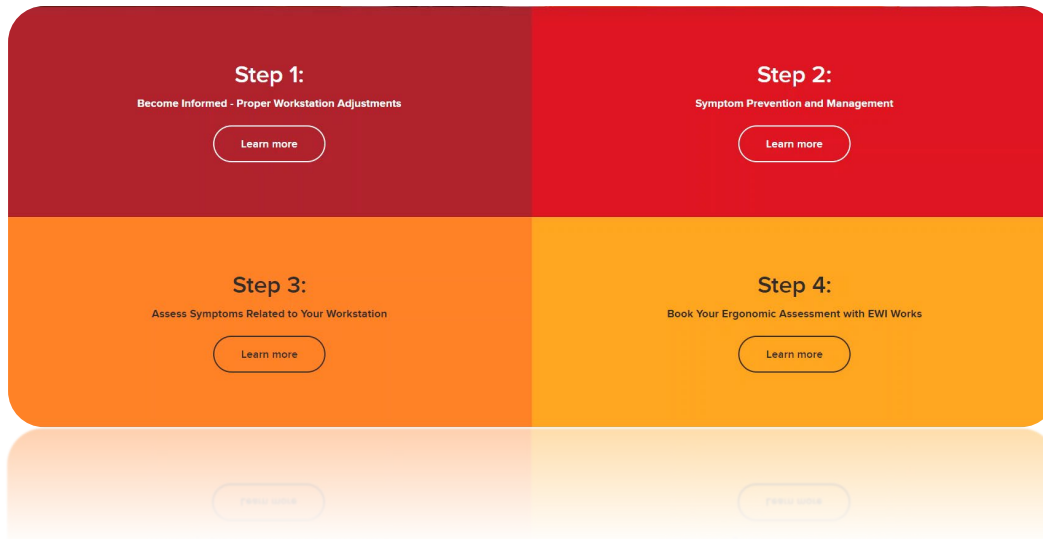
Possible signs & symptoms include:


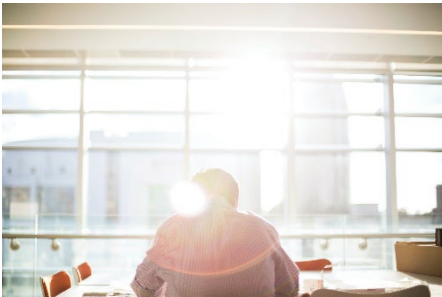
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- Dull ache
 - Sharp pain
 - Tenderness
 - Burning
 - Redness
 - Swelling
 - Tingling or numbness
 - Restricted range of movement
 - Loss of strength

Diagrams: <https://www.ewiworks.com/>

Early detection of discomfort is extremely important to mitigate injury progression. Refer to the **Proactive Ergonomic Program** website for further symptom prevention and management information.

Symptoms and Solutions



SYMPTOMS	☑ RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Eyes/Head</p> <p>Dry, tired, red, and/or blurry vision</p> <p>Headaches</p>  <p>Photo by Mehrpouya H on Unsplash</p>  <p>Photo by Bethany Legg on Unsplash</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure proper workstation setup.<input type="checkbox"/> Use Touch Typing (proper typing method).<input type="checkbox"/> Have annual checkups with your optometrist.<input type="checkbox"/> Increase font size or use a microscope for lab work, if applicable.<input type="checkbox"/> Check office humidity.<input type="checkbox"/> 20 x 20 x 20 principal – look 20 feet away from screens and precision work, every 20 minutes, for 20 seconds<input type="checkbox"/> Practice overall healthcare: restful sleep, nutritious diet, drink water, exercise, monitor medication use, and practice mental wellness.<input type="checkbox"/> Use microbreaks to perform shoulder, neck and upper back exercises.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ EWI Works – Upper back and Neck exercises<input type="checkbox"/> Perform posture checks throughout the day (when sitting, ears aligned with shoulders and hips, and when standing, hips, knees and ankles align).<input type="checkbox"/> Perform eye exercises throughout the shift<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Look up, down, side to side▪ Cup your eyes with your hands▪ Forced blinking▪ EWI Works - Eye Exercises <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Computer Vision Syndrome▪ Decrease Screen Time and Keyboarding▪ Headaches: Assess Breathing

SYMPTOMS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Neck/Shoulders/Upper Back

Tightness, discomfort, aching, fatigue



Photo by [Taisiia Shestopal](#) on [Unsplash](#)

- Ensure proper [workstation setup](#).
- Cold work environments can cause muscle tension.
 - Wear appropriate clothing for conditions.
- Take micro-breaks (5 minutes interspersed throughout each hour worked): change task, change body position, and/or perform exercises.
 - Use the [EWI Works Break Timer Tool](#) or set an alarm on your phone or computer.
 - Perform area specific exercises within your health and fitness level and/or as directed by your health care provider. [EWI Works – Upper back and Neck exercises](#)
- Vision difficulty can cause neck and shoulder tension. Refer to recommendations above for vision care.
- [Assess breathing](#): insufficient breathing can cause muscle tension

Hands/Fingers/Wrists/Forearms

Numbness, tingling, stiffness, swelling

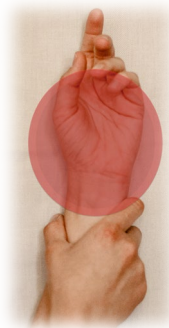


Photo by [Kateryna Hliznitsova](#) on [Unsplash](#)

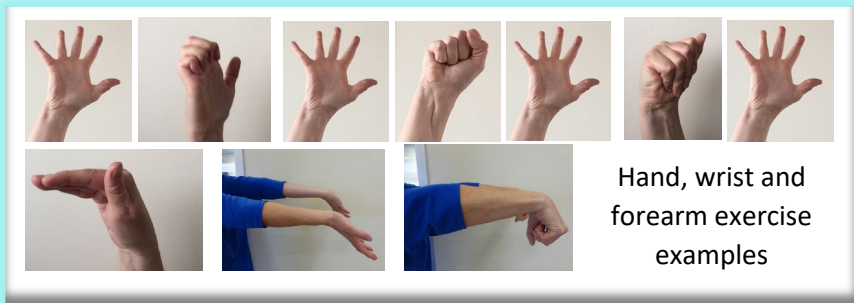
- Ensure proper [workstation setup](#).
- Perform posture checks during prolonged or sustained tasks: shoulders are relaxed, upper arms are beside torso and wrists are neutral and not resting on the work surface.



- Decrease contact stress by using padding on hard or sharp surfaces.

Diagram: <https://www.ewiworks.com/>

- Take micro-breaks (5 minutes interspersed throughout each hour worked): change task, change body position, and/or perform exercises.
 - Use the [EWI Works Break Timer Tool](#) or set an alarm on your phone or computer.
 - Perform area specific exercises within your health and fitness level and/or as directed by your health care provider. [EWI Works – Arms, Neck and Upper back exercises](#)



Hand, wrist and forearm exercise examples

SYMPTOMS**RECOMMENDATIONS****Low back and hips**

Aching, stiffness, fatigue

Image by [mohamed Hassan](#) from [Pixabay](#)

- Ensure proper [workstation setup](#).

Prolonged standing

- Alternate weight bearing and use a standing footrest.
- Use an antifatigue mat in clean, low traffic areas.
- Alternate positions between standing, leaning and stooping.

Sitting

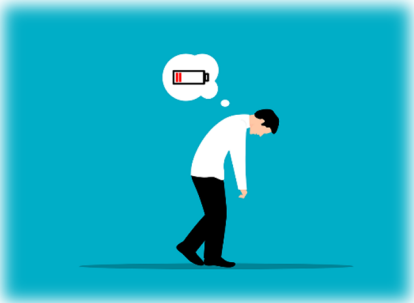

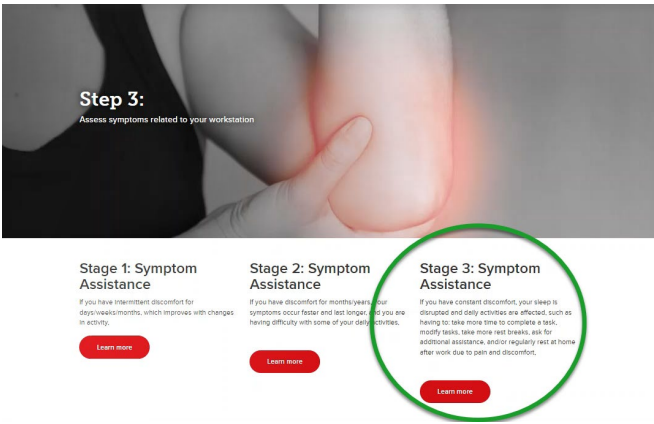
- Use proper lumbar support in the small of your back.
- Position chair height so knees are at the same height or slightly lower than hips.
- Do not cross your legs; keep feet fully supported.
- Distribute weight equally on your seat (do not sit to one side or twist).
- Take micro-breaks (5 minutes interspersed throughout each hour worked): change task, change body position, and/or perform exercises.
 - Use the [EWI Works Break Timer Tool](#) or set an alarm on your phone or computer.
 - Perform area specific exercises within your health and fitness level and/or as directed by your health care provider. [EWI Works – Leg exercises](#)

Feet and ankles

Tired and sore

Photo by [Erwans Socks](#) on [Unsplash](#)

- Check footwear for wear and tear.
- Replace footwear regularly (frequency will depend on use).
 - Footwear should have good support, fit your foot size (width and length), be breathable and light weight and have adequate grip. Consider insoles with prolonged standing job demands.
- Prolonged standing
 - Alternate weight bearing, use a standing footrest.
 - Use an antifatigue mat in clean, low traffic areas.
 - Alternate position, sit or lean if able.
 - Alternate tasks.
- Take micro-breaks (5 minutes interspersed throughout each hour worked): change task, change body position, and/or perform exercises.
 - Use the [EWI Works Break Timer Tool](#) or set an alarm on your phone or computer.
 - Perform area specific exercises within your health and fitness level and/or as directed by your health care provider. [EWI Works – Leg exercises](#)

SYMPTOMS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p style="text-align: center;">Fatigue</p>  <p>Image by mohamed Hassan from Pixabay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Check your sleep hygiene (resources- Sleep): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dark, cool and quiet room to sleep. ▪ Have a bedtime routine. ▪ Avoid caffeine and stimulants 4-6 hours before bed. ▪ Avoid screens (blue light) before bed. ▪ Similar sleep and wake times each night. <input type="checkbox"/> Perform consistent exercise and physical activities (CSEP 24 – Hour Movement Guidelines): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderate to vigorous aerobic activity 150 minutes/week. ▪ Muscle strengthening at least 2 times/week. <input type="checkbox"/> Eat a nutritious diet (Canada Food Guide): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole grains and protein. ▪ Limit highly processed food. ▪ Choose water. <input type="checkbox"/> Practice mental wellness (Mental Health Commission of Canada): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make self care a priority. ▪ Involve yourself in social activities. ▪ Notice your self-talk. ▪ Learn something new. <input type="checkbox"/> Check medication use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Speak with your physician and/or pharmacist if your use has increased or you have questions about side affects. <input type="checkbox"/> Be aware of decreased capacity at the beginning and end of the shift, when stressed, and when performing new, prolonged work tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For continuous, highly repetitive operations, design a 5 -minute break for another activity into each hour. Chengalur, S., Rodgers, S. and Bernard, T., 2009. <i>Kodak’s Ergonomic Design for People at Work</i>. John Wiley & Sons.
<p style="text-align: center;">Symptoms not previously medically assessed: numbness (loss of feeling), tingling, loss of range of motion, loss of strength, acute swelling/redness/burning</p>  <p>Image by mohamed Hassan from Pixabay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Immediately follow the Proactive Ergonomic Program Step 3 – Stage 3. 

If after two weeks your symptoms persist, after implementing the above trouble shooting recommendations, or your symptoms become worse within the two weeks, seek further assistance: [Proactive Ergonomics Program Step 3](#).