

Upper limb injuries in the workplace

Between 2020-2025, LGIS data illustrated that upper limb injuries triggered by hazardous manual related tasks make up 30.8% of workplace injuries. Parks and gardens workers, machine operators, and notably, administrative staff are all among the top five roles affected, often resulting in pain, long-term disability, and reduced productivity.



Common causes of upper limb injuries

The most common cause of these problems is body stressing, which occurs during handling, lifting, carrying, or putting down objects. Work related activities which increase this risk include:

- ▶ Prolonged repetitive work, especially using the same hand or arm actions
- ▶ Working in awkward or uncomfortable postures (e.g. overhead reaching)
- ▶ Applying sustained or excessive force with upper body
- ▶ Performing manual tasks for extended periods without adequate rest breaks
- ▶ Exposure to hand-arm vibration (HAV), when using hand-held tools for long durations

Other contributing factors include:

- ▶ Poor working environment conditions (e.g. temperature, lighting, unstable ground)
- ▶ Work design (e.g. high workload)
- ▶ Individual differences (some workers are more susceptible to certain injuries than others)

Strategies for injury prevention work design:

- ▶ Review your ergonomic setup to minimise injury risk
- ▶ Take adequate rest breaks and vary tasks to reduce excessive strain on one body part
- ▶ Review and ensure easy access to frequently used tools, equipment and other items
- ▶ Understand posture and how it may affect your work tasks

Tips for incorporating exercises:

- ▶ Perform these exercises at least 2-3 times daily, especially during work breaks
Please refer to the opposite side of this document for the exercises
- ▶ Combine stretching with strengthening exercises for comprehensive injury prevention
- ▶ Always move gently and avoid overstretching to prevent strain





Personal prevention strategies - stretching and rest breaks

Incorporating regular stretching and rest periods can significantly reduce injury risk. Here are some effective exercises:

Exercises to help prevent upper limb injuries:

1. Shoulder rolls

Purpose: Relieves tension and improves shoulder mobility.

How to do it: With your back straight, roll your shoulders forward in a circular motion for 10 repetitions, then backward for another 10.

2. Neck and shoulder stretch

Purpose: Reduces neck and shoulder tension/tightness.

How to do it: Gently tilt your head toward one shoulder, hold for 15 seconds, then switch sides.

3. Wrist flexor and extensor stretch

Purpose: Prevents wrist strain and enhances flexibility.

How to do it: Extend one arm in front with the palm facing up. Use the opposite hand to gently pull the fingers back toward your body, holding for 15 seconds. Repeat with the palm facing down.

4. Arm circles

Purpose: Improves shoulder joint mobility.

How to do it: Extend your arms to the sides and make small circles forward for 10 seconds, then backward for 10 seconds. Gradually increase the circle size.

5. Chest stretch

Purpose: Opens up the chest and shoulders, reducing tightness.

How to do it: Place your arms behind your back, aiming to grip your hands together. Hold for 20 – 30 seconds creating a gentle stretch across your chest and shoulders. To increase stretch, squeeze your shoulder blades together or raise your hands higher behind your back.

Slow-Cooker Pumpkin, Lentil & Coconut Curry

Inspired by South Asian flavours, this hearty, comforting dish combines lentils, pumpkin, and coconut. Put it on in the morning and come home to a delicious meal.

Ingredients list

For the curry:

- ▶ 1 cup dried red lentils, rinsed
- ▶ ½ cup yellow split peas, rinsed
- ▶ 1 diced onion
- ▶ ½ bunch coriander stems, sliced; leaves for garnish
- ▶ 2 tsp ginger paste
- ▶ 1kg pumpkin, peeled and cut into chunks
- ▶ 2 tsp ground turmeric
- ▶ 2 tsp garlic powder
- ▶ 2 tsp garam masala
- ▶ 1 tsp chilli powder
- ▶ 6 curry leaves
- ▶ 1 tbsp tamarind paste
- ▶ 400ml coconut cream

For the tadka:

- ▶ 2 tbsp ghee or oil
- ▶ 2 garlic cloves, sliced
- ▶ 1 tsp mustard seeds
- ▶ 1-2 curry leaves (optional)
- ▶ 2 diced tomatoes
- ▶ Warm flatbreads, to serve

Method

- ▶ Rinse lentils and split peas. Add to slow cooker with onion, coriander stems, ginger, pumpkin, spices, curry leaves, tamarind, and water to cover.
- ▶ Cook on low for 8–12 hours until pumpkin and lentils are tender.
- ▶ Stir in coconut cream, season, then switch to high.
- ▶ For the tadka, heat ghee/oil, sauté garlic, mustard seeds, curry leaves until aromatic. Add tomatoes and cook briefly.
- ▶ Mix most of the tadka into the curry. Serve with flatbreads, garnished with remaining tadka and coriander leaves.



Lvl 3, 170 Railway Parade,
West Leederville WA 6007

(08) 9483 8888  lgiswa.com.au

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