

# SAFETY FOCUSED

Presented by Blackfriars Insurance Brokers Ltd

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## Electrical Safety in the Workplace

Employees across industry lines are regularly exposed to electrical hazards. For example, while wall sockets are common in every workplace, even the small amount of electricity they contain has enough power to cause equipment damage and severe electrocutions. You also need to consider how overhead power lines, handheld equipment and wet conditions can expose you to electrical hazards.

Any contact with exposed circuitry or energised appliances can interfere with the normal electrical signals in your body and lead to shocks and burns. And, if a shock occurs while you're on an elevated surface, muscle contractions or a startled reaction can lead to a dangerous fall.

Keep these simple tips in mind to stay safe around electricity in the workplace:

- Only use equipment that appears to be in good working condition and meets HSE [standards](#).
- Check electrical cables for damage before you plug them in. Even slightly damaged cables can cause electrocutions and fires.
- Check the wattage of appliances before plugging them into sockets to avoid overloads.
- Disconnect appliances from sockets by pulling on the plastic plug and not the cable.
- Don't use sockets that feel warm, as it could be a sign of faulty wiring. Instead, have the socket checked by a certified electrician.
- Never use extension cables as permanent wiring.
- Place appliances that generate light or heat away from any flammable materials.

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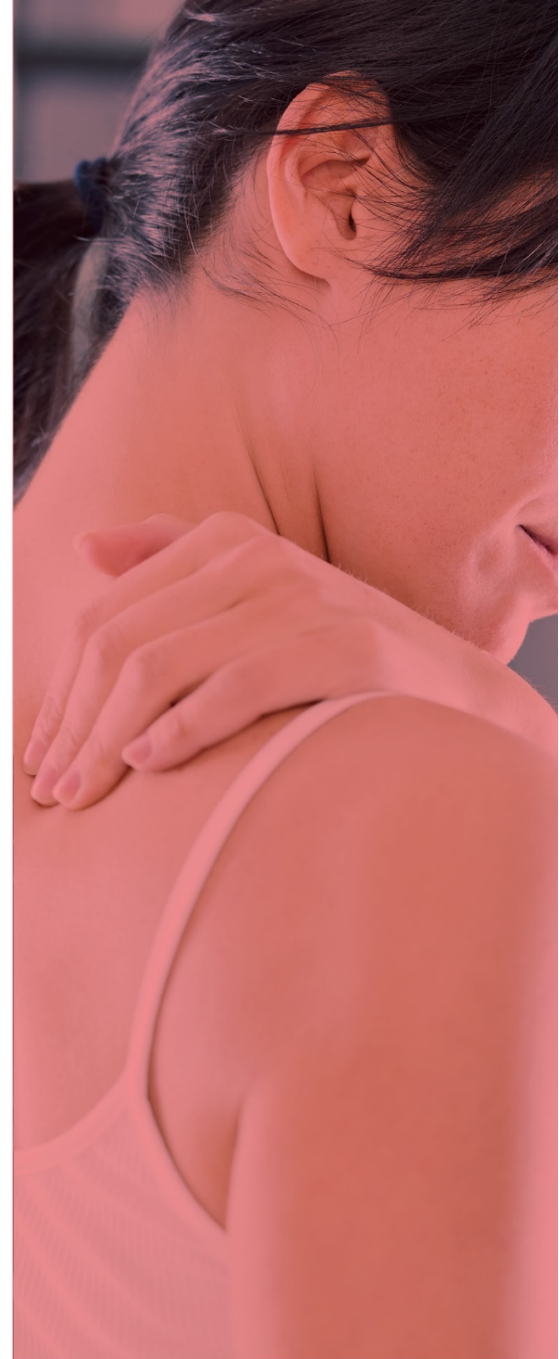
## Ergonomic Basics to Prevent Injuries

Everyone has to deal with aches and pains from repetitive motions, uncomfortable postures and bad lifting techniques. But, by practising good ergonomics, you'll be able to reduce the chances of getting injured and stay efficient in the workplace.

While simple sprains and strains are sometimes unavoidable, long-term stress on the body can lead to serious musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) that cause severe pain and lower your range of movement. In fact, HSE statistics revealed that 469,000 workers suffered from a work-related MSD last year, accounting for 35 per cent of all work-related ill health concerns and 6.6 million working days lost.

Consider the following topics to reduce your risk of workplace injury:

- **Workstation setup**—Adjust any workstations or desks that you use frequently so that your shoulders, back, wrists and hands are relaxed. You may be able to change the angles of chairs, keyboards and other equipment to better suit your body.
- **Warming up and taking breaks**—Even if your work isn't physically demanding, you should still take some time to stretch and adjust your body before you work. It's also important to avoid repetitive motions by taking short breaks to let your body rest in a new position.
- **Lifting techniques**—Never use your back to lift heavy objects. Instead, keep your back straight and lift with your legs. Your leg muscles are larger and more efficient for lifting, and even small objects can strain your lower back. If you struggle to pick up a heavy object, place it back where it was or ask someone else for help. Also, try to avoid lifting and twisting in the same motion to lower the amount of stress on your body.



Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) accounted for **35%** of all work-related ill health concerns last year, according to the HSE. You can reduce your risk of suffering from MSDs by practising proper ergonomics at work.

