Musculoskeletal Disorders or MSDs are injuries and disorders that affect the human body’s movement or musculoskeletal system (i.e. muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, discs, blood vessels, etc.).

Common MSDs include:

- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Tendonitis
- Muscle / Tendon strain
- Ligament Sprain
- Tension Neck Syndrome
- Thoracic Outlet Compression
- Rotator Cuff Tendonitis
- Epicondylitis
- Radial Tunnel Syndrome
- Digital Neuritis
- Trigger Finger / Thumb
- DeQuervain’s Syndrome
- Mechanical Back Syndrome
- Degenerative Disc Disease
- Ruptured / Herniated Disc

Why it’s important to exercise

The musculoskeletal system encompasses all of the physical structures necessary for movement, including the bones, joints, muscles, ligaments and tendons.

Regular exercise, in combination with a healthy lifestyle, is the best way to keep all parts of the musculoskeletal system strong and healthy.

Things to remember

Advice from a health care practitioner should be sought as soon as possible if you have musculoskeletal pain that:

- occurs after a traumatic event, such as a car accident or a fall
- causes waking during the night
- regardless of the change in body position or movement pattern, pain does not reduce or change
- accompanies numbness, tingling, or ‘pins and needles’ in bottom, legs or feet
- accompanied changes to bowel or bladder control.
Types of Exercises Recommended

Exercise Right recommends a combination of stretching, strengthening and improving posture through corrective movements and functional activities.

There are two phases to understanding musculoskeletal pain, firstly the need to understand the mechanism of the injury (what movement’s cause pain), and secondly how to correct poor movement patterns.

Graduated training – the best medicine is to stay active and gradually start walking at a low-moderate pace. This will assist in maintaining not only aerobic capacity, but assist with being able to complete activities of daily living

Postural correction – an accredited exercise professional will be able to provide simple cues and exercises to improve and maintain correct posture throughout day to day activities.

Right Professional

Accredited Exercise Physiologist (AEP)

An accredited exercise physiologist can analyse your movement and prescribe a suitable graduated/strengthening training program in your preferred form of exercise. Your spine and the surrounding muscles are designed for movement. It is important you seek assistance with planning exercise if you have had multiple episodes of pain.

Right Place

A rehabilitation gym

A rehabilitation gym (clinic) is the perfect environment to start exercising. In the early stages, your AEP needs to be re-educating and reassessing your movement patterns.

Right Time

Exercise in the mid-morning or early afternoon

Those with musculoskeletal disorders are best exercising in the mid-morning or early afternoon when any pain medication is in its peak effectiveness. Avoid exercising when muscles may be tense, or late in the day when the threat of fatigue is at its worst.

Strengthening – people with MSDs need to re-educate their body how to move without pain, therefore exercises catering in re-educating the body how to move correctly, is extremely important. Muscle strength, particularly in the small muscles that stabilise the lower back, does not return automatically when low back pain eases. To regain this strength, it may be required to begin with some specific strengthening exercises, with graduated difficulty to progressively increase strength.

Flexibility – along with strengthening exercises, stretching or flexibility training needs to be incorporated in the program to restore full range of movement and improve their ability to complete functional activities. Stretching of the tight muscles/structures should be completed daily.

Walking, swimming and cycling also allow people with MSDs to become active and stay active.

While you sleep, your body temperature drops, leaving you stiff and lacking flexibility in the morning. Since flexibility helps your joints move in their full range of motion during a workout, you may not perform optimally first thing in the morning.