

Conditions We Treat

Work Injuries

Every year, there are millions of work-related injuries throughout the United States. Employers pay nearly \$1 billion every week for direct workers' compensation costs alone, which includes the cost of medical expenses and legal services. Yet their expenses often pale in comparison to that of the employee.

Being out of work due to pain after an injury can be both emotionally and financially devastating. It can impact your income, your family, and your ability to succeed in the workplace. Considering these challenges, it's imperative that you recover as quickly as possible. If you or a loved one has been injured on the job, call us today to receive the treatment you need.

What Is a Work Injury?

The definition of a work injury is quite inclusive and embodies all incidents that happen as a result of your job. In some instances, the standard is clear. For instance, if an employee falls off a ladder while performing her job or overextends his back while lifting heavy materials for their employer, they incur work injuries. In other situations, there may appear to be ambiguity. A pizza delivery person, as an example, may become burned while handling hot food and this is also a work injury.

In other words, there are many types of injuries that occur in the workplace. It's important to note that if these injuries aren't treated in a timely manner they could get worse and even lead to secondary conditions, such as osteoarthritis.

Causes of Work Injuries

In 2015, overexertion and falls accounted for well over \$25 billion in workers' compensation. However, the causes — and impacts — of workplace injuries are vastly diverse.

Some leading causes and outcomes of workplace injuries include:

- **Overexertion.** Whether its dull and achy or sharp and stabbing, the pain that stems from overexertion can be excruciating. Unfortunately, a number of careers can place too many demands on your body. These may be through an abundance of inactivity, exerting too much force, or performing repetitive movements.
- **Falls.** Falls can occur while walking or climbing a ladder, or as a consequence of a complex series of actions. According to 2014 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 261,930 private industry and state and local government workers missed one or more days of work due to injuries from falls on the same level or to lower levels, while 798 workers died from such falls.
- **Repetitive Motions Involving Micro-Tasks.** This occurs when nerves become pinched or compressed. Sometimes the pain may extend to other parts of the body. Sign language interpreters, factory employees, and those who perform a lot of computer tasks often report this injury, which can show up as carpal tunnel syndrome.
- **Bone Fractures.** A broken bone can occur due to a vehicle accident, a fall, or being struck by a heavy object.
- **Plantar Fasciitis.** Plantar fasciitis is inflammation of the tissues along the bottom of the foot and usually appears as stabbing pain that occurs with the first steps in the morning.

How Physical Therapy Can Help

Work injury rehab can help eliminate or reduce your pain symptoms so that you can resume a full lifestyle as soon as possible. Your physical therapist will work with you during each visit to carry out a rehabilitation program that is tailored to your specific condition and employment requirements.

Recent decades of research has shown us the most effective physical therapy methods for work injuries. Some of these approaches include:

- **Therapeutic exercise:** As the bread and butter for nearly every physical therapist, exercise is the go-to method for most subacute and chronic orthopedic conditions.
- **Manual therapy:** Manual therapy involves skilled techniques that mobilize tissues and joints to reduce pain, decrease inflammation, and increase the range of motion.
- **Soft tissue manipulation:** Using manual techniques, your physical therapist helps allow muscles, fascia and tendons to relax, release adhesions, and reduce scar tissues.
- **Patient education:** Many work injuries persist due to overuse and incorrect body movements. To create long-lasting change, your physical therapist will educate you about how to move your body in ways that reduce pain.
- **Heat and ice:** Tried and true, this method increases tissue mobility and decreases pain.
- **Electrical stimulation:** To restore muscular function, many physical therapists rely on e-stim.
- **Laser therapy:** Light therapy not only reduces pain and inflammation, but it also speeds up the recovery process for wounds and connective tissue injuries. Ask us about our Class 4 laser.

If you've suffered from an injury, work injury rehab could help you get back to work as soon as possible. Contact our office today to schedule an appointment with a skilled physical therapist. Visit us at Healing Hands Physical Therapy 58 Parkland Plaza, Suite 100, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.