

# Tradies Health Month Health and Wellbeing

## August is Tradies Health Month and we are supporting this across Australia and New Zealand.

Tradies Health Month is aimed at raising awareness of the health and injury risks posed to those who work in a trade. The work of trades is often physically demanding and according to the Australian Physiotherapy Association, research findings show that 60% of tradies often have aches and pains as a result of their job and 38% never stretch or warm up before work.

Statistics also indicate that tradies make up a large proportion of workers compensation serious injury claims, with serious injuries not only affecting the tradies themselves, but also family and friends around them.

### So what are some of the most common injuries experienced by tradies?

Back pain is one of the most common injuries experienced as this part of the body is involved in almost all work tasks that tradies perform.

Other common injuries include;

- Shoulder and elbows injuries due to repetitive reaching and holding actions
- Knee injuries related to repetitive bending/squatting
- Ankle sprains related to working on uneven surfaces.

### So as tradies, how can you look after yourself better and prevent injuries at work?

- Stop and think about your work tasks before you begin, considering where things can go wrong and where safer choices can be made. It's easy to become complacent about tasks you do every day and work on auto pilot
- Pace your workload and rate throughout the day to avoid issues related to overuse and fatigue
- Use equipment available for lifting and ask for help with heavy lifts. When lifting use the correct back position which means maintaining the natural curves of the spine, especially a small arch in the lower back, keeping a wide base of support, and keeping the load close to your body
- Communicate well with your workmates to ensure you are working in the most efficient and safe manner
- Be willing to speak up if you feel that something is unsafe and may lead to injuries
- Don't put yourself at risk of injury by rushing
- Manage injuries immediately with the RICE method (rest, ice, compression, and elevation) and seek medical advice as required – don't ignore persistent pain!
- Warm up each morning before work with some stretches targeted at the muscles used most often

Below are some examples of simple exercises you can do to help prevent aches and pains;



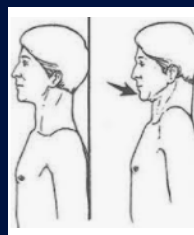
#### Knee to chest stretch

Lay on your back bringing your knees towards your chest. Place your hands below your knees pulling them gently towards your chest and hold for 2 seconds.



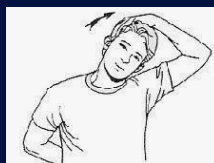
#### Seated twist stretch

Sitting in your chair cross your legs and twist towards the leg that is stacked on top of the other. Twist as far as you can tolerate. Hold this for 30 seconds each side



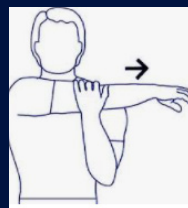
#### Chin tuck stretch

Sit upright and look straight ahead. Pull the chin and head straight back until a good stretch is felt at the base of the head and top of the neck



#### Upper Traps stretch

(the region between shoulder and neck). Place one hand behind your back and place your other hand on your head and gently stretch your head away from the arm that is placed behind your back.



#### Horizontal Triceps stretch

Bring your arm across your body, elbow bent slightly and press your arm into your chest