

## INTRODUCTION

The entertainment industry is a fast-paced, dynamic field that demands long hours and physically demanding tasks from its workers. From theater productions and film sets to live concerts and events, employees are often required to handle heavy equipment, engage in repetitive motions, and sometimes perform high-risk activities. This environment increases the risk of musculoskeletal injuries. In this lesson, we will cover what musculoskeletal injuries are, some common causes of musculoskeletal injuries in the industry, some common musculoskeletal injuries, and ways to minimize or prevent musculoskeletal injuries.



## WHAT MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES ARE

Musculoskeletal injuries (sometimes referred to as musculoskeletal disorders) are injuries that affect your bones, joints, ligaments, tendons, or muscles. Injuries can range in severity from minor to major and can either be short-lived or long-term, depending on the nature of the injury, the health history of the person, and other personal factors.

*Note: If you have any in-depth questions about musculoskeletal injuries or an injury that you currently have, please speak with your medical provider.*

## COMMON CAUSES OF MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

There are many reasons for why musculoskeletal injuries occur within the entertainment industry. These reasons include, but may not be limited to:

- Manual handling that can occur from transporting, setting up, and dismantling heavy equipment, props, and so on
- Repetitive motions that may be performed during the day
- Remaining in one position for a prolonged period of time
- Performance-related activities that may occur during rehearsal, the performance, or event
- Stage and set hazards that may occur due to irregular surfaces, temporary setups, wires or cables, etc.
- The wearing of inadequate footwear for the job task

## COMMON MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Some of the most common musculoskeletal injuries in the entertainment include, but may not be limited to:

- Amputations
- Concussions
- Contusions
- Crushings
- Dislocations
- Fractures



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- Inflammation
- Lacerations
- Punctures
- Raptures
- Severances
- Sprains
- Strains
- Carpal tunnel

## WAYS TO MINIMIZE OR PREVENT MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES

There are many ways in which musculoskeletal injuries can either be prevented or minimized within the entertainment industry. This includes:

### Ergonomic Assessments

One of the first things that you or others can do is to perform an ergonomic assessment of your work location and tasks. Once the ergonomic hazards have been identified, you can speak with your supervisor or designated contact to see if things can be changed to make work areas more ergonomically friendly, such as adding anti-fatigue mats, adjustable chairs, etc.

Additionally, you should practice proper lifting techniques when lifting tools, boxes, or other pieces of equipment to help minimize the chances of hurting your back. This includes:

- Bending your knees
- Keeping your feet shoulder width apart
- Keeping your back straight
- Lifting close to your body

### Performing Warm-Up and Cool-Down Routines

Whether you are an actor, stunt performer, dancer, cameraman, production assistant, or someone else in the crew or cast, it is important that you help your body prepare for the day's physical activities by performing a warm-up and cool-down routine. This will normally be a stretching routine that can only take a few minutes at the beginning and end of your day.

*Note: Please consult your medical provider before starting any stretching routine.*

*For stretching ideas, please refer to our lessons "Stretch and Flex Exercises," "Full Body Stretches: Arms and Shoulders," "Full Body Stretches: Back and Waist," "Full Body Stretches: Hands and Wrists," and "Full Body Stretches: Legs."*

### Taking Regular Breaks

While this may not always be feasible, depending on your production, taking regular breaks throughout the day can help in the minimization of you or others developing musculoskeletal injuries when you are performing repetitive tasks or doing any heavy lifting. At the very least, you should take all provided meal and rest breaks that are scheduled. If you have questions regarding the taking of breaks for your production, please speak with your supervisor or designated contact.





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## **Wearing Proper Foot and Support Aids**

Another thing that you and others can do to help minimize the chances of musculoskeletal injuries occurring is to wear supportive footwear for your role and job task. If you have questions regarding what type of footwear may be best for you, please speak with your medical provider.

Additionally, If you will be performing any stunts, heavy lifting, or any athletics, you may want to consider the use of braces or other supports to help minimize injuries to certain parts of the body, such as knees, elbows, or wrists.

## **Rehearsal Modifications**

If you are a performer or stunt person, and you know that you will be repeating certain motions over and over again or performing strenuous activities over and over again, you may want to consider speaking with the director or stunt coordinator about modifying the rehearsals to limit the repetitive motions or strenuous activities until the actual performance is to be performed. If you have concerns or start to feel that something is wrong during the rehearsal, please speak with the director and/or stunt coordinator, as the actual performance may need to be modified.

## **Use of Cushioning**

If you are a performer or stunt person, you may want to speak with the stunt coordinator and/or director about the possibilities of cushioning being used to help reduce the impact on your joints.

## **Rotating Work Tasks**

Depending on the production, you may want to speak with your supervisor about the possibility of job tasks being rotated between people within the department.

## **The Use of Lifting Aids**

If you will be lifting or carrying heavy equipment, you may want to consider the use of mechanical lift aids, such as carts, tripods, gimbal and camera rig vests, dollies, and so on. You should use all lifting aides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and your production's policies and procedures.

## **Practicing Proper Housekeeping**

You should also practice proper housekeeping of the production location or set to help minimize any chances of someone tripping, slipping, or falling, which can contribute to the development of musculoskeletal injuries.

## **Being Aware of Your Surroundings**

Due to how chaotic and populated production sites can be, you should always be aware of your surroundings. This includes watching the placement of your feet and the movement of people around you, as knocking into someone or stepping in the wrong place could result in sprains, strains, or broken bones.

*Please note that this is especially important when being a part of live sporting events, where you may be on the sidelines, as the athletes may run into you while performing their plays or throw objects into the area where you are standing.*





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## CONCLUSION

To conclude, prevention of musculoskeletal injuries in the entertainment industry requires a proactive, multifaceted approach. There are things that you can do personally, such as incorporating stretching routines into your day, wearing appropriate footwear, and taking all rest and meal breaks. Additionally, if there are things on set or at the production location that concern you due to uneven terrain, tools and equipment, lifting devices, and so on, please speak with your supervisor or designated contact. If you have questions regarding musculoskeletal injuries, please speak with your medical supervisor.

