



# Typical Physical Limitations for Common Injuries

This document provides a list of typical limitations for common physical injuries.

Neck	Shoulder	Elbow/Forearm	Wrist/Hand
<p><b>Ensure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks</li> </ul> <p><b>Limit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities with arms above shoulder level, including reaching down</li> <li>Activities with lifting and carrying to light or medium loads</li> <li>Hanging weights</li> <li>Ladder climbing</li> </ul> <p><b>Avoid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lifting and carrying with arms above shoulder level</li> <li>Extremes of looking up, down, or over the shoulder, especially if sustained for more than a few seconds</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ensure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks</li> </ul> <p><b>Limit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climbing ladders</li> <li>Activities using arm above shoulder level, including reaching down</li> <li>Activities which require lifting and carrying to light or medium loads</li> </ul> <p><b>Avoid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holding the arm outstretched for periods especially while holding weights and applying force</li> <li>Lifting and carrying with arm above shoulder level</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ensure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks</li> </ul> <p><b>Limit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive or sustained gripping, especially where high forces are required</li> <li>Repetitive elbow bending</li> <li>The total time spent keyboarding or driving</li> <li>The use of impact tools (including power tools and hammers)</li> </ul> <p><b>Avoid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hanging weights</li> <li>Forearm rotations</li> <li>Pressure on the elbow</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ensure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks</li> </ul> <p><b>Limit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive gripping, especially where high or sustained forces are needed</li> <li>Lifting and carrying to light or medium loads</li> <li>The total time keyboarding or driving</li> </ul> <p><b>Avoid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extreme postures of the wrist, especially with force</li> </ul>

Low Back	Knee	Ankle
<p><b>Ensure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks</li> <li>• The worker can change position between walking, standing, and sitting</li> </ul> <p><b>Limit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking on uneven ground</li> <li>• Lifting and carrying to light or medium loads, depending on frequency and postures</li> </ul> <p><b>Avoid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jarring</li> <li>• Repetitive bending</li> <li>• Long periods of static standing or sitting</li> <li>• Extreme bending of the back</li> <li>• Twisting of the back</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ensure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks</li> <li>• The worker can occasionally elevate the knee</li> <li>• The worker can frequently change position between standing, walking, and sitting</li> </ul> <p><b>Limit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking on uneven ground</li> </ul> <p><b>Avoid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long periods of standing or walking</li> <li>• Deep squatting, kneeling, or crouching</li> <li>• Pivoting of the knee</li> <li>• Participating in activities requiring bracing, balancing, or running</li> <li>• Stair use or ladder climbing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ensure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The worker can occasionally elevate the ankle</li> <li>• The worker can self-pace and/or take micro breaks</li> </ul> <p><b>Limit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of stairs</li> </ul> <p><b>Avoid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long periods of standing or walking</li> <li>• Walking on uneven ground</li> <li>• Climbing ladders</li> <li>• Deep squatting and crouching</li> <li>• Activities requiring balancing, bracing, or running</li> </ul>

These typical physical limitations are guidelines to help develop an appropriate stay-at-work or return-to-work plan.

### Strength categories for handling loads

National Occupational Classification (NOC) is the nationally accepted reference on occupations in Canada and provides a standardized framework for definitions such as pulling, pushing, lifting and/or moving objects during the work performed.

The NOC defines strength used in handling loads (e.g. pulling, pushing, lifting and/or moving objects during the work performed) as follows:

**Limited:** Work activities involve handling loads up to 5 kg

**Light:** Work activities involve handling loads of 5 kg but less than 10kg

**Medium:** Work activities involve handling loads between 10 and 20 kg

**Heavy:** Work activities involve handling loads more than 20 kg