



## Repetitive Motion Disorders

Repetitive Motion Disorders (RMDs) are a family of muscular conditions, which may occur through frequently repeated motions carried out in typical work or daily activities. Conditions considered part of the RMD family include: carpal tunnel syndrome, bursitis, ganglion cysts, epicondylitis (tennis elbow), and tendonitis.

RMDs are often caused by, but are not limited to, an excess of uninterrupted repetitions of a motion, unnatural motions, muscle fatigue, or poor posture. These disorders are most commonly found in the hands, wrists, shoulders, and elbows. However, they also occur in the back, hips, neck, knees, feet, legs, and ankles. Some of the symptoms of Repetitive Motion Disorders include:

- Pain
- Tingling
- Numbness
- Loss of flexibility and strength
- Visible swelling
- Tenderness
- Loss of coordination
- Muscle spasms

These symptoms may occur during the repetitive activity, immediately following the activity, or several hours later. Therefore, many people are never diagnosed because they believe that their aches and pains are part of the territory of their job. However, if a person has more than one of the listed symptoms, on a regular basis, they should contact their physician. When treated, most people have a full recovery. Those people who delay contacting a doctor tend to have more chronic conditions and are harder to treat, making it more likely that they will have permanent damage.

Common treatments for RMDs may include reducing the activities that cause the symptoms, taking more frequent breaks when performing the activities, stretching and relaxation exercises, ice and medication, and/or physical therapy or surgery in the most severe cases. However, knowing how to prevent RMDs from occurring is the best option. This often means practicing ergonomics. Ergonomics is the science of fitting workplace conditions and the demands of a job to the capabilities of the worker, instead of making the worker fit the job.

If you believe you may have a Repetitive Motion Disorder, contact a medical professional, but also contact your employer so you can work together in getting your job done in a safer and healthier manner.

### Sources:

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

[http://www.ninds.nih.gov/health\\_and\\_medical/disorders/repetitive\\_motion.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/health_and_medical/disorders/repetitive_motion.htm)

New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health

<http://www.nycosh.org/rsi.html>

*Copyright 2005 \*National Safety Council\* All Rights Reserved. Reviewed 5/05.*