

## **TILE** (task, individual, load, environment)

Remember **TILE** for safe manual handling to help reduce musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions.

Manual handling can injure your back, neck and joints.

Following the four **TILE** steps will greatly reduce the risk of MSK injuries.

Find more information on **TILE** on the VGC hands web page: [VGCgroup.co.uk/hands](http://VGCgroup.co.uk/hands)

## Common hand injuries

Watch out for symptoms caused by repetitive tasks. These are some of the most common injuries:

- Carpal tunnel syndrome – damage to a nerve running through the wrist and into the hand. Symptoms can include numbness, tingling, and pain in your thumb and fingers, and pain and burning up your arm and wrist.
- Vibration white finger – numbness and tingling of the fingers, especially in cold weather, through use of vibrating hand tools. Symptoms can include loss of strength and grip.
- Dermatitis and burns - caused by direct contact with chemicals, detergents, metals or very hot or cold objects. Symptoms include dry or cracked skin.

### **Protect your hands!**

Wear the correct PPE gloves and keep your hands warm and dry whenever possible. If your gloves get wet and do not dry out overnight, request a fresh pair if possible.

Around 469,000 workers suffered from work-related musculoskeletal disorders in 2017/18.

### **6.6 million working days were lost.**

There is a clear link between MSK problems, mental health and work loss.

MSK problems cause pain, loss of mobility and dexterity, which can limit activity. This can lead to a loss of confidence and increased fears about the future.

Factors that can contribute to MSK injuries:

- Fixed or constrained body positions
- Continual, repeated movements
- Force concentrated on small parts of the body like the hand or wrist
- A pace of work that does not allow time to recover between movements
- Operating vibration equipment can lead to hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS)

### **Follow safe systems of work**

Take breaks from repetitive tasks by sharing tasks with fellow workers. Monitor your vibration times and do some hand exercises regularly.

- Stretch fingers by spreading them wide apart for a few seconds. Repeat three times with each hand.
- Stretch your thumb by holding it down gently for five seconds. Repeat three times with each hand.
- Stretch your wrist by making circles with your hands. Repeat 10 times.