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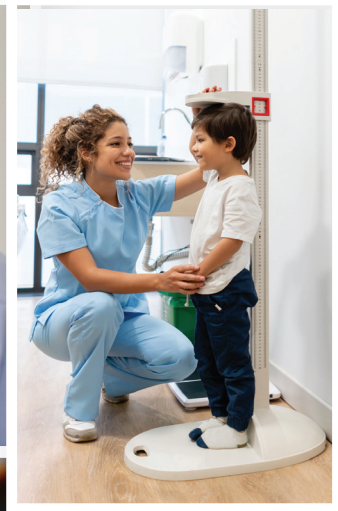
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Diabetes & Endocrinology Clinic

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How to avoid repetitive strain injuries

Repetitive strain injuries can upset workflow and compromise exercise routines. Though such injuries are often characterized as nuisances, for many people they're much more than a minor inconvenience.

Data from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration indicates that repetitive strain injuries (RSI) affect roughly 1.8 million workers in the United States each year. Such injuries are common across the globe, as researchers in Sweden estimate that roughly one in 50 workers is suffering from the symptoms of RSI. These injuries also are not limited to adults, with one study from researchers at Australia's University of Technology finding that 60 percent of children suffered discomfort when using a laptop.

The Cleveland Clinic notes that RSI most commonly affect certain parts of the body, including:

- fingers and thumbs
- wrists
- elbows
- arms
- shoulders
- knees

These areas of the body are vulnerable

when people routinely engage in activities in which they repeat the same motions. For example, office workers who spend eight hours a day typing away at their computers may develop RSI in their fingers, thumbs, wrists, and/or elbows. Such workers need their jobs, so what are they and others who suffer work-related RSI to do? Prevention of RSI is not always so easy, but individuals can try various strategies to reduce their risk of developing RSI.

Make adjustments to your workstation. Individuals whose RSI are a byproduct of sitting at a desk and working on a computer all day long can adjust their workstations to see if this helps reduce strains. For example, a keyboard wrist rest is an inexpensive accessory that can be placed between users and their keyboards to keep their wrists in a neutral position and alleviate

wrist pain that results from typing all day. Mouse rest pads serve a similar function and can be equally effective. A keyboard and mouse pad should be low enough to allow users to relax their shoulders.

Consider replacing your desk and/or chair. Desks and chairs also could increase risk for RSI if they are not compatible. Office workers should be able to pull their chairs beneath their desk when they're sitting and working. If the desk is too small or low to the ground to allow that, or if the chair is not adjustable so it can be pulled up to the edge of the desk while working, workers' posture could suffer, as they will be forced to lean into their desk and narrow their shoulders when typing. The Cleveland Clinic notes that improving posture helps people avoid putting extra stress on their bodies that can contribute to RSI.

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Activities to strengthen the heart

The heart is a vital component of the human body. Without a functional heart, life is simply not possible. As with other muscles in the body, it is important to give the heart a workout to improve its strength and vitality. Intermountain Health says an individual who does not exercise is more than twice as likely to get heart disease as someone who does. UCI Health says heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death worldwide.

Exercise is an ideal way to strengthen the heart and reduce your risk for heart disease and other conditions. Certain activities are prime for boosting heart health.

Aerobic exercise: Aerobic exercise raises heart rate and gets the blood pumping throughout the body. Aerobic activity improves circulation, and over time it ensures the heart does not have to work as hard to pump blood, thus potentially lowering blood pressure. Also, aerobic exercise can reduce the risk for type 2 diabetes and can help those with diabetes to control blood glucose more readily. Aerobic exercises include brisk walking, running, swimming, cycling, playing tennis, and other activities that get the heart pumping. Aim for 30 minutes each day, for at least five days a week.

Resistance/weight training: Building muscle can help the body burn fat and boost metabolism. This type of training can use weights or the body's own resistance. Improving muscle mass while reducing body fat and excess weight are heart-healthy steps to take. Strength training can be incorporated

into a routine two to three days a week.

Balance and flexibility exercises: A person may wonder what flexibility and balance has to do with heart health. While there isn't a direct correlation to how the heart works, these types of activities will help reduce the risk of falls or injuries to muscles and joints while working out. Inactivity is dangerous for the heart, so ensuring that physical activity can continue is important. Flexibility and balance exercises keep the body limber, and can be incorporated into daily workouts. Stretching, tai chi, yoga, and pilates can be included two or three times a week.

Healthy eating: The foods people eat can affect heart health. Opt for lean protein sources and foods that include healthy fats. Salmon, avocados and olives are some options. Balance these foods with whole grains that are full of fiber, which can help a person feel fuller longer. Fiber also is essential for preventing atherosclerosis, a condition that causes hardening of the arteries.

Meditation: Slowing down, performing deep-breathing exercises and meditation can reduce stress. That, in turn, can help prevent damage to the heart.

Strengthening the heart and maintaining its health involves various activities that can be incorporated into daily routines.

The basics of colorectal cancer

Colorectal cancer is a form of cancer that develops in the colon or rectum. These parts of the body are the tail end of the digestive system. The Canadian Cancer Society says the colon is the longest part of the large intestine. The colon absorbs nutrients and water while sending waste to the rectum. Stool collects in the rectum and then is passed out of the body through the anus. Colon cancer and rectal cancer often start the same way and share many symptoms and risk factors, so health care professionals commonly group them together.

How does colorectal cancer begin?

The MD Anderson Cancer Center says that cancer of the colon or rectum typically starts as a polyp. This is a small overgrowth in the tissue lining. Most of these polyps are adenomas. Adenomas are considered pre-cancerous growths and some can develop into a form of cancer known as adenocarcinoma. There are other, less common types of colorectal cancer as well.

What causes colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer occurs when there are changes to cell DNA, known as mutations or variants. Certain genetic changes that raise the risk of colorectal cancer are inherited, says Medline Plus. Others occur from the environment and lifestyle. Certain factors make a person more likely to develop colorectal cancer:

- Older age
- Family history
- History of colorectal polyps
- Having a genetic syndrome, such as familial adenomatous polyposis
- Having chronic ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease for many years
- Smoking cigarettes
- Drinking alcohol
- Obesity

Being a Black individual

What are the symptoms of colorectal cancer?

Many people with colorectal cancer do not have symptoms at onset. If and when symptoms appear, they will depend on the size of the cancer and where it is located in the intestine, advises the Mayo Clinic. Symptoms can include changes in bowel habits; rectal bleeding or blood in the stool; ongoing discomfort in the belly area, like pain or gas; a feeling that the bowel doesn't empty all the way; losing weight without trying; and weakness or tiredness.

Can anything reduce colorectal cancer risk?

Although it is impossible to prevent cancer, one can lower the risk by doing the following:

Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Drink alcohol in moderation, if at all.

Stop smoking right now.

Aim to get at least 30 minutes of exercise on most days.

Maintain a healthy weight.

Some medicines can reduce the risk of colon polyps or colon cancers for people at elevated risk.

Schedule a routine colonoscopy to check colon and rectal health and remove any polyps as they form.

The American Cancer Society says colorectal cancer cells can grow into blood vessels or lymph vessels and travel to distant parts of the body, which is why early detection is key. Individuals should speak with their doctors about colorectal cancer risk and steps they can take to lower their chances of being diagnosed with the disease.

Hello to healing.

Kindness is a gift that each of us is born with. And when we share it, the goodness that's released is amazing. This human connection is important to our well-being, but it's essential when we're sick and hurting. We know from experience that treating every patient with kindness, empathy, and respect is key to their healing. We call this power *humankindness*. It has driven us for more than 130 years.

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