



# In the workplace:

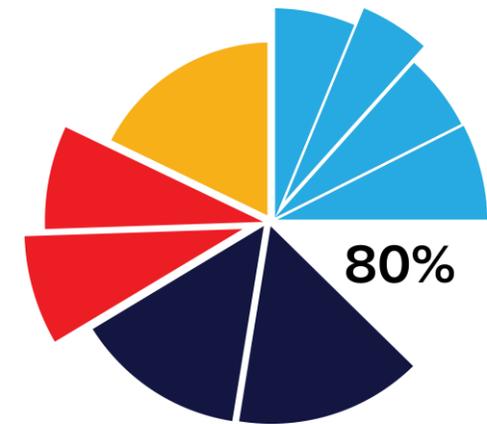
Back pain, arthritis and  
musculoskeletal conditions

# The WHAT

## What are RMDs (Rheumatological and Musculoskeletal Diseases)

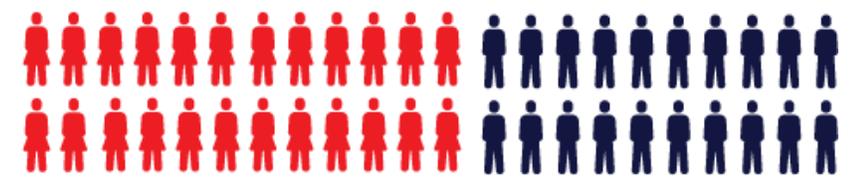
- Ankylosing spondylitis
- Juvenile idiopathic arthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Psoriatic arthritis
- Back pain
- Fibromyalgia
- Osteoarthritis
- Gout
- Osteoporosis

These 9 conditions listed account for approximately 80% of the musculoskeletal conditions impacting Australians.



# The WHY

# Boring Stats (but I promise I'll be quick!)



7.3 million + Australians live with a musculoskeletal condition



150+ Musculoskeletal conditions  
 4 million Australians living with back problems  
 3.7 million Australians living with arthritis  
 854,000 Australians living with osteoporosis



Low Back Pain  
No.1 cause of global disability



**IMPACTS**  
 Financial/Economic  
 Emotional  
 Social  
 Physical  
 Mental  
 Professional

**\$14.7 billion Health Expenditure**

- \$9.95B Hospital Costs
- \$3.31B Primary Care Costs
- \$1.49B Referred Services



# The IMPACTS



## Personal Impacts

- Disability
- Pain
- Lower levels of wellbeing (quality of life)
- Reduced ability to participate in society
- Leading cause of early retirement
- Co-morbidities (diabetes, cardiovascular disease)
- Financial – Social – Personal – Psychological



## Workplace Impacts

- Productivity
- Costs
- Psychosocial safety
- Staff/Team Morale

# The TOOLS

## From a legal perspective

- *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth)
- State and Federal Discrimination Law (especially reasonable adjustments)
- Enterprise Agreement or Modern Award
- Employment Contract
- Workers' Compensation

## From an internal (management) perspective

- Communication and transparency
- Flexible work arrangements
- Reasonable workplace adjustments
- Awareness
- Understanding

# The Challenges

## Recruitment and Employment

- Lack of understanding
- Fear
  - How much is this going to cost?
  - Once we let one person do it everyone will
- General narrative
  - 'Yeah...sure...back pain! Looking for Workers Comp more like!'

## Recruitment and Employment

- Individual – deeply personal
  - Will I or won't I 'tell'
  - Do I identify as being 'disabled' in some way
  - How to I explain my pain and disability if it is 'invisible'
- Understanding the inherent job requirements – what is needed to 'do the job'
  - Will reasonable adjustments be required?

## The REAL Challenge

- What can I ask?
- What should I ask?
- What do I tell?
- When do I tell?

# The Sales Pitch



## For the Employer

- *Increased productivity and reduced costs*
- *Attract the BEST talent*
- *Retain employees*
- *Increased employee satisfaction and engagement*
- *Support workforce participation*
- *Improved mental health and wellbeing*
- *Diversity*

## For the Employee

- *Psychosocial benefits*
- *Financial benefits*
- *Overall Health and Wellbeing*

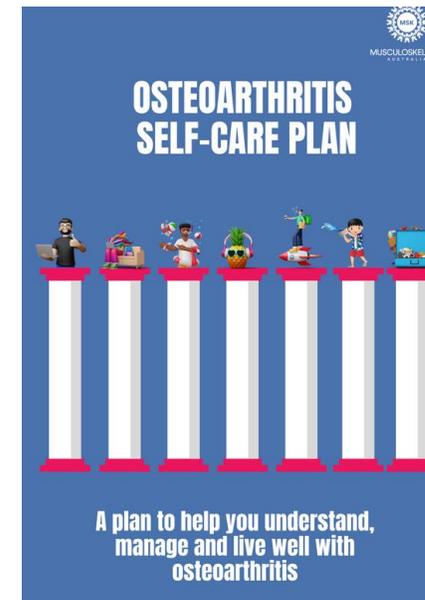
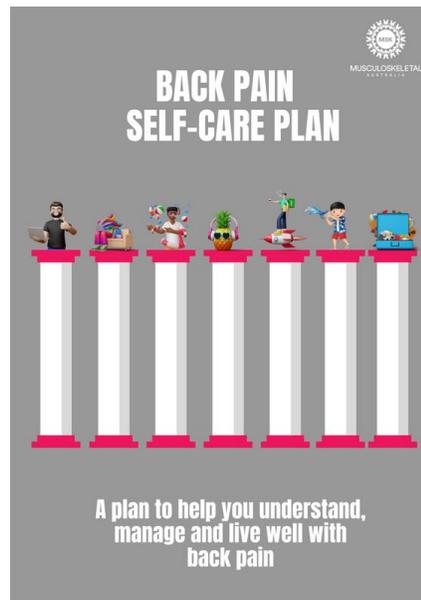
# Resources



**Musculoskeletal  
Health Australia**  
Knowledge. Choice. Connection.  
[muscha.org](http://muscha.org)



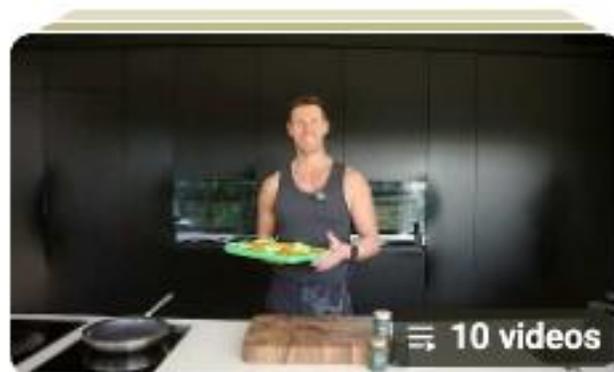
[wbsi.org.au](http://wbsi.org.au)



Musculoskeletal Health Australia

Knowledge. Choice. Connection.

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# Thank you

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