

## EARLY WARNING – FATIGUE

### The Signs

Fatigue is an early warning of the potential for RSI and can manifest locally and systemically.

### Local Fatigue

There are three groups of symptoms that are associated with local (postural) fatigue:

1. **Biomechanical** (involves muscles, tendons, bone structures):

Fatigue in the cervical and thoracic spine leads to an aching, dull pain in the head, neck, and lower back, and between the shoulders; in the affected area of the wrist and hands, tenderness, weakness, swelling, or temperature changes are noted.

2. **Circulatory**:

Impaired blood flow results from compression of the main weight-bearing tissues. Symptoms, such as loss of feeling and "pins and needles" are experienced.

3. **Neuro physiological** (involves function of the nervous system):

Prolonged backward bending, forward bending, or rotation of the neck may lead to a temporary loss of strength in the arm and hand and a brief loss of ability to perform fine, manipulative skills.

### Systemic Fatigue

One or more of the following signs and symptoms of systemic fatigue can be experienced in varying degrees:

1. Feelings of fatigue, either over the whole body or in a particular area.

2. Pain - may be described as intermittent or a constant, dull ache;

intermittent or sharp shooting; or a burning sensation.

3. Heaviness of a particular area.

4. Loss of sleep, which may cause irritability and anxiety.

In the early stage of injury pain, swelling or numbness may occur intermittently, whether or not repetitive movement is being performed. If action is not taken, the pain may persist while the operator is performing non repetitive movements or even when that part of the body is not being used.