

THE INDUSTRIAL ATHLETE DIGEST

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PAIN PUZZLES: FACT AND FICTION

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Oww! A grimace. Eyes squeeze shut. Muscles tense. Frustration brews, patience wanes, and a sense of helplessness looms. Sound familiar? About **51 million Americans** experience pain that interferes with their daily lives and thousands sustain injuries at work or home every day. And, even though the sense of pain is quite common for so many of us, so too are the misconceptions about the topic. We've gone through painstaking effort to identify some doozies and educate you on the truth. Let's dive in!

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT INJURIES

Repetitive motion injuries aren't common injuries in the workplace and require a specific mechanism of injury to be considered a true injury.

Not true! Repetitive motion injuries are **one of the top 10** most common injuries along with slip, trip, and fall injuries, vehicle accidents, falling objects, cuts and lacerations, overexertion injuries, and others.

Injuries only have physical symptoms.

False! Injuries can have emotional, psychological, social, and financial symptoms as well.

"Toughing it out" and thinking an injury is not that bad. It will just get better with time.

No, not quite. Rest is important, but proper evaluation and treatment are necessary for healing and to reduce the likelihood of the injury worsening or healing incorrectly.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PAIN

All pain is bad.

Nope! Pain is a necessary function of the body. This function keeps us safe, but also lets us know if something is wrong. *Pain protects us from further injury!* For example, the pain you feel when experiencing symptoms of a heart attack can be present in your jaw or arm rather than your chest (referred pain).



Acute pain and chronic pain are the same thing.



Quite the opposite! Acute pain has a known and treatable cause. It's a sudden, sharp, or intense kind of pain that lasts less than 3 months. Treatment can include anything from general first aid and rest to bandages, a cast, surgery, or physical therapy. Chronic pain can be constant or intermittent and varies in intensity. It is usually associated with a specific illness or injury and regularly lasts more than 3 months. Treatment addresses physical, mental, and social factors.

Medication is the only option to treat pain.

Also false. Pain relief isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. No one treatment is guaranteed to offer relief to every person. With the help of your medical professionals, alternative methods of treatment include acupuncture, massage, physical therapy, and calming techniques.

Soreness and pain are pretty much the same.

Eh.. no. The biggest difference is time. Muscle soreness can occur 48 hours after exercise or activity and is usually located in a muscle group. You might feel achy, stiff, and tender to the touch for a few days. Pain onset can be sudden or gradually worsen, and is usually located in a joint or region of the body. It typically will occur while immediately engaged with a physical activity and can have a duration of weeks, months, or longer.

 Pain can be very manageable with proper care. Make sure to reach out to your Injury Prevention Specialist, onsite medical, or physician for proper evaluation and treatment. 

Ashley Shoemaker, MHA, ATC || Ashley received her bachelor's degree from Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati, OH and her master's degree from Franklin University in Columbus, OH. As an industrial athletic trainer, she has also worked in the secondary and clinical settings. Ashley has additional certifications in Concussion Care and IASTM. Ashley enjoys watching sports (Cincinnati Bengals and Reds), hanging out with her husband, family and friends, and spending time with her two fur babies, Duke and Zeus.



Work Right NW is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialists in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.

