

Physical overload at work:

Organizational factor for workers with a Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD)

Interpretation:

Physical overload at work negatively influences return to work or sickness absence duration of workers with a MSD.

Proposed measurement tool (★★★):

« Physical effort » subscale (4 items) of the Questionnaire on the Experience and Assessment of Work (QEAW) (Van Veldhoven Meijman, 1994).

Caution:

This factor can only be evaluated by accredited professionals. Venturing into the evaluation of this factor is therefore prohibited. If you suspect that this factor may be involved, you must rely on the professionals in question. Self-administration or the administration of a questionnaire by an unqualified person may lead to undesirable consequences such as the calculation of erroneous scores and the misinterpretation of results that may result.

However, the elements (items or portion of interview) constituting this tool can provide additional information to other return to work actors or stakeholders, such as the actors from the organization (employer, human resources, supervisor, union representative, etc.). This allows for a better understanding of what the factor implies, which in turn can help to target some more specific elements or needs that would require (1) a possible intervention (using an accredited professional) or (2) adjustments of the organization, especially in terms of prevention.

« Physical effort » subscale of the Questionnaire on the Experience and Assessment of Work (QEAW)

For each statement, please use the scale below to indicate how often your work would seriously bother you these days, given your current health condition.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Never Almost Occasionnally Frequently Usually Almost Always
 never always

	Never	Almost never	Occasion- naly	Frequently	Usually	Almost always	Always
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. In your work, would you be seriously bothered by having to lift or move loads?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. In your work, would you be seriously bothered by frequently having to bend down?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. In your work, would you be seriously bothered by regularly having to reach up too high?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. In your work, would you be seriously bothered by having to do the same movements continuously for a long period of time?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

→ Final score (mean of 4 items): / 7 (possible range: 1 – 7)

Scoring instructions

To calculate the mean score of the questionnaire, sum the scores to the statements, then divide by 4 to get the mean. The final score can then vary between 1 and 7.

Interpretation of scores

A higher score would mean physical overload at work, which would potentially have a negative impact on RTW. Although there are no studies demonstrating the predictive value of RTW for this questionnaire, our research team would recommend intervention if the mean score is ≥ 5 .