

Tip 13 - Suffer a MSD, Yourself!

You're probably thinking 'What kind of sadistic sicko is this guy?'. Let me explain myself. I am not saying you go down to your factory floor now, miraculously turn into a guinea pig, and lift that 80kg piece of machinery equipment and cause yourself a life long spinal MSD, for the cause. I am saying if and when you are afflicted by a 'bad back' or an achy neck, or a sore knee after running, et cetera, that you raise your MSD awareness and think to yourself what if these symptoms and the resulting disability were every day.



Picture yourself. You are walking down *Regents Street* in London, you know, near Mayfair, the most expensive hotel on the *Monopoly* board. All around you are world class flagship stores and award winning restaurants. You come across this boutique store called *Milliner's Fine Hats*. You don't open the door, the store sales assistant opens it for you. As you enter he immediately asks you in a deep and professional tone 'How can I help you Sir?' You say 'I am looking for a new hat'. He replies 'For what occasion Sir?'. You express it isn't for an occasion, more a state of mind. The sales assistant politely asks 'What line are you in Sir?' You reply 'Well, I'm in Health & Safety?' He smiles and replies with a sureness of tonality 'Well, Sir. I have just the right hat for you'. After a few minutes he returns holding the most opulent hat you have ever seen. He proudly declares to you 'This is the Heal the World hat Sir, and I do believe it suits you perfectly.' You part with the small sum of £300 and leave the boutique store ready to heal the world.

Ok. Back to the theme of *Tip 13**. So with you wearing your Heal the World hat I want you to picture the lives of the following people.

First Employee. Robert, a 45 year old, Corrugated Packaging Factory Operative. His roles include pushing 1 tonne reals of paper; pulling palletised loads again that weigh up to a tonne; standing all day picking stacks of paper and feeding them into the machine. Since first suffering from a back injury at the age of 32, his back pain has increased steadily each year, up to the point that he is diagnosed with the severe spinal degenerative condition called Spinal Stenosis. He used to play football for his local team. Going out with the lads after the weekend game for a beer or two really gave Robert some life enjoyment; what with another mundane week on the factory floor ahead. I want you to feel Robert's physical pain and his life pain. What did you say to me? You can't feel it. Right, you listen here! You feel Robert's pain right now!

Second Employee. Henry, a 63 year old, retired Baggage Handler at Manchester Airport. His role included ultra repetitive, enforced stooping in the plane hold, chucking bags. He retired early as he was getting weakness in his right hand as well as twitching in the fingers. This was associated with burning pain in his neck. He was worried until he got his diagnosis that it could be Parkinson's. The Radiologist confirmed that he had an osteophyte in his neck compressing his spinal cord and that it was essential to remove this and replace the cervical (neck) disc that was beyond degenerative. Henry agreed to the surgery waiting 12 months on the NHS. The surgery resulted in Tetraplegia. Henry had always dreamed of playing golf through his retirement; now he was confined to a bed watching it on TV. Ok, with that telling off just now, I want you to feel Henry's physical pain and his life pain.

Third Employee. Audrey, a 25 year old ... 'with that name?' ... I hear you cry ... Yes, Audrey, a 25 year old Council employee working at the local Leisure Centre. Her role includes a quick turnaround in the main hall where mats have to be removed in order for the badminton courts to be set up. Each day she has to bend and twist, lifting and then throwing the mats. There are 50 and each one is removed by her alone. At 28 years old she suffers from a cartilage tear in her left knee. She has key hole surgery but over the coming years the knee becomes severely arthritic.

*What *Tip* number was this? *Tip 13* did I hear you say? Unlucky for some. Remember to lift properly next time, as if you don't you might be unlucky and turn into that guinea pig.

Audrey is a keen runner which she finds supports her mental health and well being, as well as keeping her slim. Due to the degenerative knee her running days are over. Through her late 30s she puts on a lot of weight, and what with the lack of exercise she becomes very down. She consults her GP, who refers her to a Psychiatrist who diagnoses her with Clinical Depression. I want you to feel Audrey's physical pain and her life pain.

So assuming you don't have a chronic musculoskeletal disorder, I politely request that you envisage having one, say a prolapsed lumbar disc*, and what its negative effects on your life would be. So in this space below I want you to write down 5 things/ activities (dear to your heart) that you couldn't do in your life because of this injury.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

This is a good place to start with regards to the importance of your Manual Handling Risk Management action plan. As we mindfully read up to the final *Tip* this action plan will be there, in all its glory. But one last reminder, don't forget to keep your Heal the World hat on, that you bought in *Milliner's Fine Hats...* well ... it did cost you 300 bob.

*If you are not up to speed with the signs, symptoms and total destruction of a life that a Lumbar Disc Prolapse causes then read my Blog via our web page www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk/lumbar-disc-prolapse