

MUSCULOSKELETAL PROBLEMS

August 2023

Police Mutual

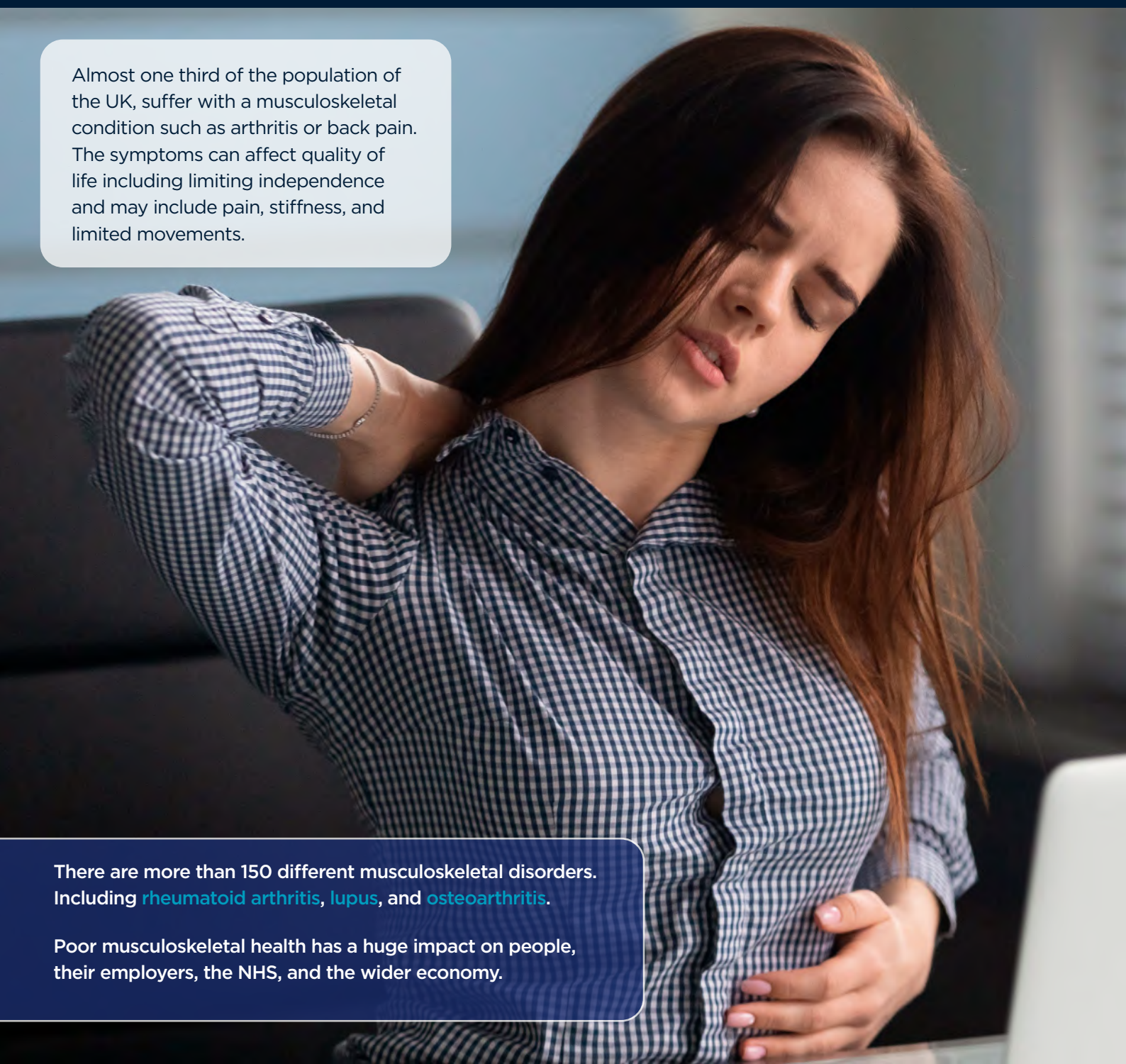
Musculoskeletal disorders are conditions that affect your nerves, tendons, muscles, joints, and bones. They can range from minor injuries to long-term conditions.

They are a very common type of health problem, which can affect people of all ages, although they are more prevalent in women, they can be short-lived or last a long time.

Almost one third of the population of the UK, suffer with a musculoskeletal condition such as arthritis or back pain. The symptoms can affect quality of life including limiting independence and may include pain, stiffness, and limited movements.

There are more than 150 different musculoskeletal disorders. Including [rheumatoid arthritis](#), [lupus](#), and [osteoarthritis](#).

Poor musculoskeletal health has a huge impact on people, their employers, the NHS, and the wider economy.



Musculoskeletal pain

The most common cause of musculoskeletal pain are injuries due to falls, car accidents and sports injuries. The pain can range from mild to severe enough to interfere with your everyday life.

This pain can be just a simple muscle strain or stiffness or may be more serious. If you have severe pain which gets worse over several weeks, or if you feel unwell with the pain, you should see your doctor.

If you are in pain, click [here](#) to read about ways you can reduce it.



Prevention

How we spend our time, can have a serious effect on our musculoskeletal health. To prevent problems:

Stress

Stress is also associated with back pain. For more details on reducing the stress you feel read our guide [here](#).



Sit down less

Staying in one position for too long, such as at a desk or in a vehicle, can be harmful. This is because being in a seated position places more pressure on your lower back than when you are standing.

Make sure your chair provides firm support for the base of your back. When sitting for long periods of time, it's important to try to maintain the "curve" in your lower back. This can be achieved by sitting up straight with your bottom right at the back of the chair.

Ensure you stand up and where possible move around regularly.

Take care lifting

It's important to take care when picking up heavy objects, you should lift by maintaining your posture, and keep repetitive motions to a minimum. Many people damage their backs when lifting light objects off the floor or bending to pick something up. Click [here](#) for the best way to stay safe when lifting.

Sleeping positions

Sleeping takes up one third of our lives. To help get a good nights sleep and wake up refreshed and not in any pain, then remember to lie on your back or side, this will keep your back straight. Try to choose a pillow that supports your neck rather than your head, limit the number of pillows you use as using too many pillows can cause neck pain. Your bed shouldn't be too hard or too soft and be able to support your spine so that the natural curves are maintained while lying on your back.

When you wake up, take your time getting out of bed correctly.

Workstation

If you regularly work at a desk, setting up your workstation correctly only takes a few minutes and should eliminate many of the pains or discomfort you may feel. If you are struggling, obtain advice from your health and safety officer.

Healthy diet

It's important to maintain a healthy weight and balanced diet in order avoid stress on your joints. Ensure you have enough calcium and Vitamin D in your diet, as these are particularly important for bone health. For more details read our healthy eating guide [here](#).

Smoking

Smokers are more likely to experience back, neck and legs pain. If you'd like help to stop smoking, read our guide [here](#).



Physical Activity

The most important way to prevent musculoskeletal problems is to regularly take part in physical activity.

Many people with musculoskeletal conditions often mistakenly think that physical activity will make their condition worse when it can actually benefit them. More than 4 in 10 people who report living with a long-term musculoskeletal condition are inactive.

All adults should aim to be active daily, engaging in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week, such as cycling, brisk walking or swimming.

Adults should undertake muscle strengthening activities at least 2 days per week, such as yoga, exercising with weights, or just carrying heavy shopping bags.

Activities found to have the most benefit for muscle and bone strengthening include racket sports, dancing, Nordic walking, and resistance training.

Building muscle, bone and joint strength helps maintain your body's resilience. Physical fitness can prevent pain, fractures and falls later in life.

Always remember to warm-up before exercising, talk to your GP before starting a new exercise regime, go at your own pace and listen to your body.



Support & Sources of Information

[Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance](#)

[Arthritis Action](#)

[The Pain Toolkit](#)

[Back Care](#)

[HSE.Gov Back pain](#)



Police Mutual Services

Our Care Line Service provided by Health Assured can offer advice and information, helping with a range of concerns including emotional support. Take a look at the e-portal or download the APP.

Health & Wellbeing e-portal

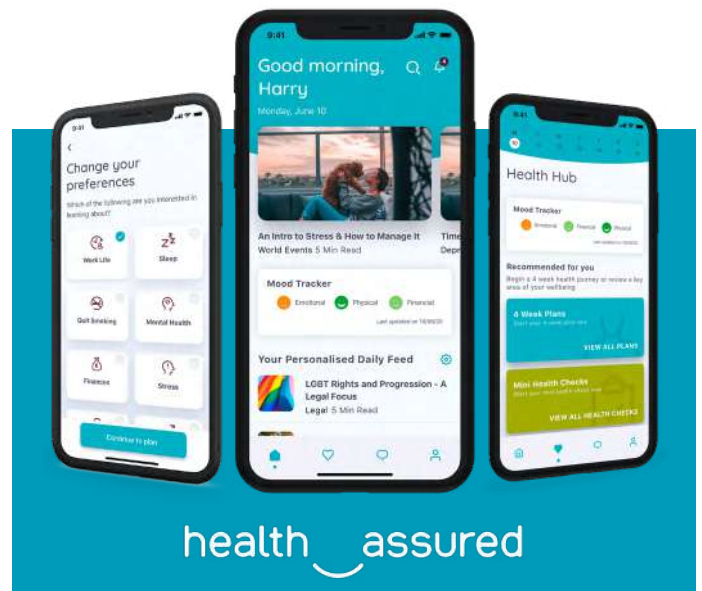
<https://healthassuredap.co.uk>

Username: policemutual Password: careline

We've teamed up with **PayPlan***, one of the UK's leading free debt advice providers, who offer free and confidential advice to anyone in serious financial difficulties.

They're able to advise you on a range of debt solutions suited to your individual circumstances, helping to protect you and your family with a sustainable way to manage your debt.

Get free and confidential help to combat your debt, call **PayPlan*** on **0800 197 8433**.



Download the **Health Assured App** and register today - your code is **MHA107477**

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To read more of our wellbeing guides take a look at our **Wellbeing Hub** [here](#).

Call us **01543 441630**
Visit policemutual.co.uk

We're open from
9am - 5pm Mon - Fri

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