

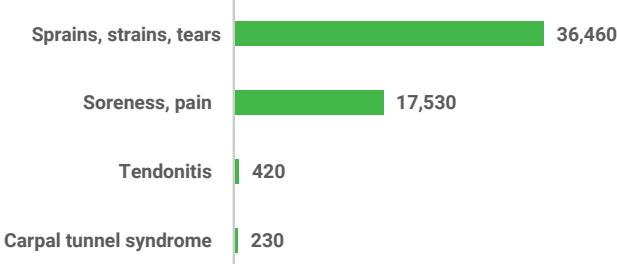
Industry Spotlight: Retail Trade

Purposeful interventions can prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

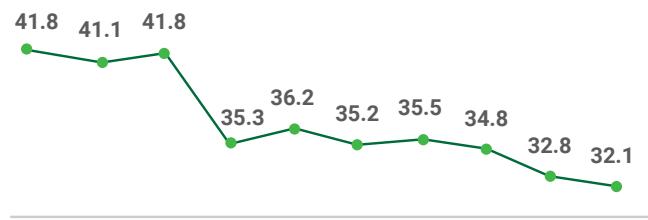
Injury Trends

The retail trade industry has long been plagued by MSDs. In recent years, the industry has seen a lower number of MSD injuries – which may be attributed to consumer shifts to online purchasing. According to **Injury Facts** and **BLS**, despite steadily declining injury trends[†], in 2020 the industry still experienced 32 workers out of every 10,000 reporting a MSD. There were 14,770 injuries due to overexertion in lifting/lowering and 2,220 injuries due to repetitive motion activities in 2020. In addition, \$44,000 was estimated to be spent in 2020 per **medically consulted** injury, and serious, nonfatal workplace **injuries** in retail amounted to more than \$5.25 billion in 2019.

2020 Retail Trade MSDs



Retail Trade MSD Rates*



*per 10,000 full-time, private sector workers

[†]These numbers represent the number of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work with the U.S. and private industry.

*The total number of MSD injuries in the Retail Trade Industry includes other industries that are subsets of this industry; BLS does not report all industries at higher level of details.

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Potential Risks

Assess and understand the main risk factors for MSDs in your workplace. According to **NIOSH**, retailers experience MSDs commonly from:

- Manual material handling
- Static posture
- Repetitive motion
- Heavy lifting



Potential Solutions

Of all the MSD risks found within retailers, the most pervasive remains manual material handling. Recommended **solutions** include:

- Integrate assistive-powered devices to lift/lower, transfer, stock and push/pull goods. Examples include conveyor belts, self-adjusting handcarts, battery powered pallet stackers or vacuum lifts.
- Consider wearable devices such as exoskeletons/suits to reduce employee lifting/lowering burden.
- **Reduce** bending and **reaching** motions by keeping most commonly accessed and heaviest objects between knee and shoulder level; store items off the floor.
- Robust training programs for new employees emphasizing safety.

Key Takeaway

Employers are encouraged to create tailored MSD solutions best suited for their organization. Manual material handling is a key risk factor and it is vital to limit this risk to protect workers. Technology can help assess and eliminate MSD risks through visual analytics, powered devices or equipment, and exoskeletons/suits, to name a few. Also, make sure risk assessments are up-to-date, as understanding job tasks can provide key insights into workplace/task redesign to reduce potential risks.

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