

PREVENTING MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES IN SILVICULTURE — **WORKER**

The Preventing Musculoskeletal Injuries in Silviculture series includes information sheets for licensees, contractor/supervisors and workers. Musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs), such as sprains and strains, make up the largest number of workplace incidents in silviculture. They cause pain and suffering and make it hard for workers to carry out their normal activities. They can also become permanent or long-term injuries.

If you suffer an MSI and cannot do your usual amount of work, you won't be able to earn money doing piecework. The other workers on your team will have to work harder to get the job done, otherwise the project will take longer than planned. The contractor's costs may go up if projects are delayed or if incidents need to be investigated.

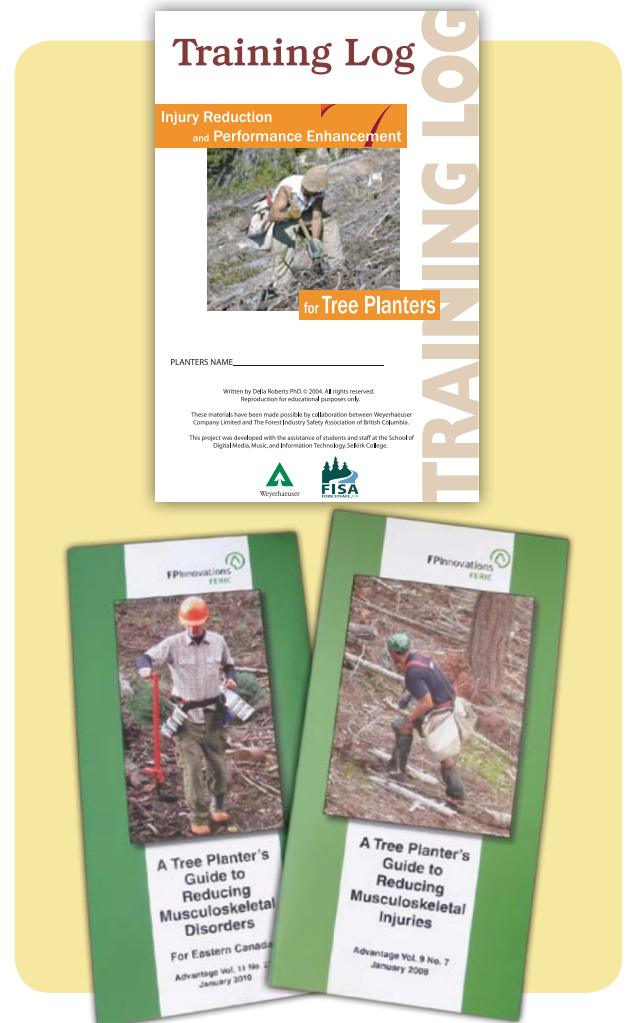
As a worker, you can help reduce the risk of MSI by planning and preparing for the upcoming season, making sure you know what to do on the job, communicating with your supervisor, and taking care of yourself.

PLAN

1. Physically prepare for tree-planting work (see Delia Roberts's *Fit to Plant Training Log* or *The Desperate Planter's Last Chance* under "Additional Resources").
2. Use equipment that fits you properly and that is appropriate for the conditions where you will be planting (see the FPInnovations Infoflip *A Tree Planter's Guide to Reducing Musculoskeletal Injuries* and the FPInnovations Tree Planters Web Portal under "Additional Resources").
3. Bring appropriate camp equipment to ensure a restful sleep.
4. Start with a slow, steady pace to warm up the body for the season.

Prepare for the planting season by using the *Fit to Plant Training Log*.

A Tree Planter's Guide to Reducing Musculoskeletal Injuries Infoflip by FP Innovations has specific information about safe work techniques and equipment fit



TRAIN

5. Make sure that you've been trained to:
 - Identify MSI risk factors and control them (see *A Tree Planter's Guide to Reducing Musculoskeletal Injuries* and the Tree Planters Web Portal under "Additional Resources")
 - Use proper techniques with neutral posture
 - Read the ground to find the best spot to plant the tree (soft soil, no rock, etc.)
 - Change hands (plant ambidextrously, or "ambi")
 - Pace yourself according to your capability and environmental conditions
 - Use well-fitting and well-maintained equipment
 - Wear warm, layered clothing and hand warmers in cold weather
 - Use shock/vibration-absorbing gloves or wraps on equipment
 - Recognize and report early signs and symptoms of MSI
 - Practice good nutrition and hydration pacing throughout the day and evening (see Delia Roberts's *Power Eating for Power Planting* under "Additional Resources")
 - Follow a good sleep and recovery schedule



Communicate with your supervisor to make sure that you are working safely.

COMMUNICATE

6. Report early signs and symptoms of MSI to your supervisor.
7. Ask questions if you need more information.

SELF-CARE

8. Take care of yourself by paying attention to:
 - Proper nutrition and hydration
 - Pacing and recovery time
 - Appropriate stretches and warm-up exercises before, during, and after your shift (see *A Tree Planter's Guide to Reducing Musculoskeletal Injuries* and the Tree Planters Web Portal under "Additional Resources")

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources from FPIInnovations are available at the Tree Planters Web Portal:
<http://fpi.na5.acrobat.com/tree-planters/>

- *A Tree Planter's Guide to Reducing Musculoskeletal Injuries*, Advantage vol. 9, no. 7, June 2008
- *Train-the-Trainer Workshop: Implementing a Tree Planter's Guide to Reducing Musculoskeletal Injuries – Intervention Checklist*
- *Train-the-Trainer Workshop: Implementing a Tree Planter's Guide to Reducing Musculoskeletal Injuries – Technique and Training Checklist*

The following resources by Delia Roberts can be found at the Selkirk College "Treeplanting" web page:
<http://selkirk.ca/research/faculty/treeplanting/>

- *Fit to Plant Training Log*
- *Top Ten Tips for Tree Planters: How to Eat to Keep Planting*
- *Power Eating for Power Planting*
- *The Desperate Planter's Last Chance*

For more information go to WorkSafeBC's Ergonomics page: www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/Ergonomics/Home.asp

