

WCX3B – Hand Arm Vibration

August 2022

Hand Arm Vibration (HAV) – What is it?

Hand arm vibration is vibration transmitted into worker's hands and arms

- Comes from the use of hand held power tools, hand guided equipment or by holding materials being worked by hand-fed machines
 - i.e., from drills, compactors/whacker packers, wood chippers etc
- Frequent exposure to HAV can cause two forms of permanent ill health:
 - Hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS – also known as vibration white finger)
 - Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS)

Hand Arm Vibration – Health effects

Symptoms of hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS):

- Tingling/numbness and inability to do fine work or everyday tasks (like doing up shoe laces)
- Loss of strength in hands/fingers
- Fingers going white and then becoming red and painful on recovery

Symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS):

- Tingling, numbness, pain and weakness in hand and fingers

Both start as temporary issues but can become permanent disabling injuries with continued exposure over a few years.

Hand Arm Vibration – Controls / what can be done

Substitution

- Swap to tools that cause less hand arm vibration or change work method to one that is known to cause less exposure to hand arm vibration

Administration

- Scheduled rest times / work rotation – have a break from using power tools for at least 5 mins every hour or rotate through different tasks so you are not doing the same work all day
- Stretching hands, wrists and forearms – helps restore blood flow / prevent HAVS and CTS
- Maintain power tools, check tools are operating properly prior to use, keep cutting tools sharp

PPE

- Gloves with anti vibration gel in them

Hand Arm Vibration – PPE

Gloves

- Trialling a few different gloves that have anti-vibration gel in the palm of the glove to reduce amount of vibration transmitted into hands



Hand Arm Vibration – stretching to help mitigate injury

1. Ball Squeeze



3 x 15 squeezes

2. Wrist Extension



2 x 10 (20 sec)
each side

3. Thumb Opposition



3 x 15 each side

4. Palm Massage



1 x 5 min each side

5. Bilateral Finger Stretch



3 x 10 (20 sec)

6. Thumb to finger Opposition



3 x 15 each side