

VIBRATION 'WHITE FINGER'

Hand-arm vibration comes from the use of hand-held power tools and is the cause of painful and disabling disorders of the blood vessels, nerves, joints and muscles of the hands and arms.



Early signs and symptoms to look out for?

- Tingling and numbness in the fingers (which can cause sleep disturbance).
- Losing feeling in your fingers.
- Loss of strength in your hands (you may be less able to pick up or hold heavy objects).
- The tips of your fingers going white then red and being painful on recovery (vibration white finger), particularly in the wet and cold.

If you continue to use high-vibration tools these symptoms are likely to get worse, for example:

- The numbness in your hands could become permanent and you lose all feeling.
- Increasing difficulty in picking up small objects such as screws or nails;
- 'White finger' happens more frequently affecting more of your fingers.

Vibration 'white finger' is not restricted to decreasing efficiency at work, it affects lives:

Victims report that they are no longer able to carry out social activities –

Not being able to pick up small objects can mean difficulty playing darts, carrying out DIY. Fishing is impossible when you can't feel the lines. Even reading a paper become a struggle when you have to wet your fingers all the time because you can't feel the paper between the fingers.

Hand tool rating

Tools that vibrate are given a rating, a length of time that they can be used by one person in any one day. It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that these maximum times are heeded.

Failure to comply can result in fines or even worse, having to pay compensation to employees affected by 'white finger'.

Further reading: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/>