

# Health & Wellbeing

## September – Mature-aged workforce wellness



### *What do we know about the mature-aged workforce?*

- Australia's population is ageing, and workers will both need and want to remain in the workforce for longer, adding to societal pressure for people to remain in the workforce beyond the age of 65.
- About 2 in 5 nurses and midwives were aged 50 and over in 2015.
- The average age of employed nurses and midwives in both 2011 and 2015 was 44.4 years. The proportion aged 50 and over grew from 38.3% to 39.0%.
- Aged-care has a mature-aged workforce with the average age increasing.



### ***Musculoskeletal injuries***

Nursing is a physically demanding job, as you frequently spend time completing manual handling tasks such as lifting/moving patients and other heavy equipment. Nursing is the occupation that most commonly suffer from back injuries, even more than the construction industry.

Cases of chronic musculoskeletal conditions are projected to soar by 43% over the next two decades, driven most sharply by projected increases in the prevalence of osteoarthritis.

## ***Tips to maintain back health***

**Stretching:** Stretch your back regularly and before your shift. Being flexible is a great preventive measure to fight against back pain.

**Healthy habits:** Maintaining a healthy weight through eating a wide variety of nutritious foods and being active every day is key. This does wonders for your body (including your back). Extra weight can put a strain on your back and other limbs.

**Sleep:** Get enough sleep! A common cause of overexertion is sleep deprivation. Each person requires a different amount of sleep, but establishing a regular sleep pattern will give you more energy to take on that long shift.

**Appropriate footwear:** Wearing appropriate footwear will allow for easy arching in the foot and reduces the chance of slipping. The shoe should be snug around the back of your heel but not overly tight. Nursing shifts can be long, so a shoe that is comfortable for moving around and fits well is extremely important.



## ***Tips to recover from a back injury***

**Seek professional help:** Seek immediate attention from a professional (GP or Physiotherapist).

**Healthy habits:** Eat a wide variety of nutritious foods and ensure you get adequate sleep to give your body the best chance of recovery, like recuperating from any illness.

**Control anxiety:** Try to control your levels of anxiety around the injury to allow your body to focus on recovering, rather than protecting it against further injury.

**Rest:** A large proportion of serious back injuries are the result of a secondary strain from not resting when a minor injury has already occurred.