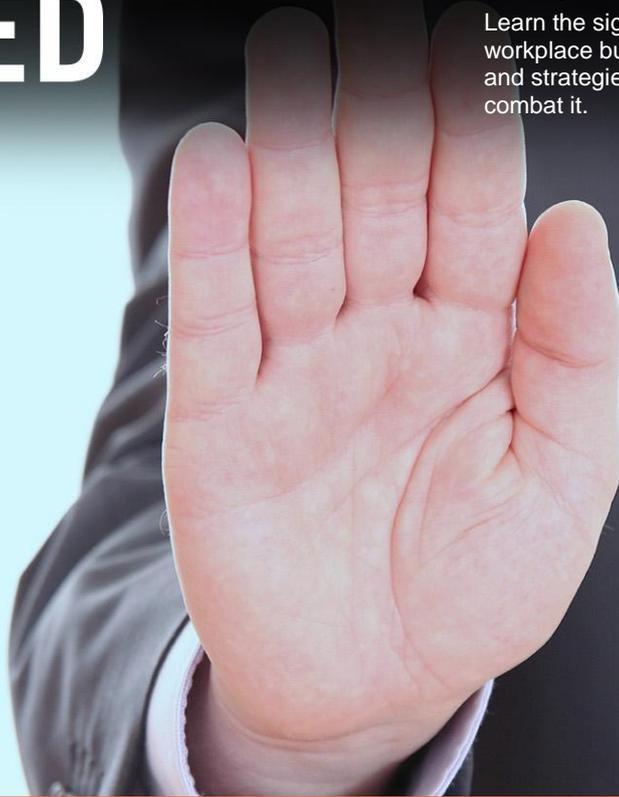


Learn the signs of workplace bullying and strategies to combat it.

Take advantage of laptops' benefits without sacrificing your health.



A monthly safety newsletter from

Bullying in the Workplace

Bullying in the workplace is fatal to productivity and harmful to health. The devastating effects of bullying can plague the bully, the bullied and anyone else in the area.

Workplace bullying can take many forms—it can be directed at specific people or related to certain work activities. Making the matter even murkier is the fact that there is no legal definition for bullying. Experts generally describe bullying as involving negative behaviour targeted at an individual, or individuals, repeatedly and persistently over time. 'Negative behaviour' includes:

- Ignoring or excluding
- Assigning unachievable tasks
- Spreading malicious rumours or gossip
- Delegating meaningless or unpleasant tasks
- Making belittling remarks
- Undermining co-worker integrity
- Withholding information deliberately
- Undervaluing employees' contributions
- Degrading others in public

The effects of bullying are not confined to the workplace—they can permeate every aspect of the victims' lives. Bullying can cause psychological health problems, such as depression, and physical health problems such as sleep difficulties or stomach pains.

If you are the victim of bullying or have witnessed it in the workplace, know that there are ways to deal with it. Start by speaking to someone you feel comfortable talking to about your concerns. This could be your manager, a co-worker or a trade union representative. You could describe the behaviour you have been experiencing and get an opinion about whether it is bullying.

Try to resolve the issue informally. This could involve you, with the support of a colleague or manager, approaching the person whom you believe is treating you unfairly. Describe the behaviour, explain how it makes you feel, and politely ask the person to stop.

If that does not work, resort to mediation by a neutral third party. After exhausting any other informal procedures, follow our formal complaints procedure. We have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to bullying—we want everyone to feel safe and comfortable at work.

Bullying can make work miserable, and its effects can seep into your personal life. If you are being bullied, find an ally. Sharing your story with co-workers may help empower others who are suffering, too.



**Crendon
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Preventing Laptop Strain

Laptops are everywhere. They boost worker productivity, encourage flexible work schedules and help remote employees stay connected at the push of a button.

But the widespread adoption of laptops as an essential business tool comes with a price: laptop strain.

Laptop strain is the excessive stress placed on your body due to the awkward ergonomics of using a laptop. Bad posture is an inevitable by-product of using a laptop. Because laptops' keyboards are attached to their screens, users are forced to push the device back to arm's length for optimal viewing while hunching their shoulders to remain close to the keyboard.

Hunching your shoulders in a static position wreaks havoc on your spine, neck, upper back and arms. When your body is in motion, it is much easier to bear a heavy load. But staying in the same hunched-over position for hours, which is common for employees who work solely or primarily with a laptop, consistently wears your body down until serious injuries result.

By adopting some of this simple guidance, you can take advantage of laptops' numerous benefits without sacrificing your health:

- Use laptops with a separate keyboard and mouse so you can place the laptop on a stand and open the screen at eye level.
- Place your laptop on a stable base that gives support for your arms. Never place it on your lap.
- Take regular breaks to move around and stretch your muscles.
- Practise good sitting posture to support your lower back and prevent any awkward turning or twisting.
- Adopt good habits before you start feeling pain—laptop strain can build up over time.

These slight changes are all it takes to prevent laptop strain. At , we want to make sure our employees have all the tools necessary to do their jobs safely and properly.



Safety in NUMBERS 123

By 2015, as many as **70 to 80 per cent** of workers may be partially working away from the office, most likely using laptops, according to the HSE.



Real-life Case Study

An accounting supervisor in a London firm recently resolved his long-standing problem with a workplace bully. The supervisor had been with his firm for almost two years. He was a model employee with 15 years of experience.

After two years, the supervisor began to report to a new manager. His new manager was controlling and frequently used intimidation tactics to motivate employees. She constantly found fault with the supervisor's work and began to disparage his performance in front of other employees. The supervisor began experiencing headaches and back pain. His concentration faltered, his self-esteem plummeted and he was diagnosed with depression.

The supervisor finally decided to take action. Working with a third-party mediator, he was able to air his grievances and get an apology from his manager, who was unaware her actions were so extreme. She subsequently toned down her criticism, which boosted the supervisor's self-esteem and led to a less hostile work environment.