

# Standing Strong

## The Impact of Pain on America's Workforce

A national survey examining how pain – especially chronic knee pain – affects workers in physically demanding professions across the U.S.

### Methodology Overview

1,000 U.S. full-time workers surveyed who spend significant time on their feet

Surveyed professions included:



First responders



Teachers



Tradespeople/Laborers



Food service/Hospitality



Retail workers



Active military

### For many workers, pain has become part of the job.



**85%**  
experience pain at work at least sometimes



**4 in 10**  
often or always work in pain

Pain is increasingly normalized in physically demanding professions, affecting workers throughout the workday and at home.

### Pain can impact income, mobility, and quality of life.



**54%**  
lost income due to missed shifts or reduced hours



**46%**  
say pain prevented career advancement opportunities



**Nearly 6 in 10**  
say pain negatively affects personal relationships and social life

### Most workers don't talk about pain – they work through it.



**Nearly 90%**  
push through pain rather than ask for help



**4 in 10**  
avoid reporting pain due to fear of job impact or perception

### Women

**are more likely than men** to strongly agree that they typically push through pain rather than speak up



**56%**



**43%**

Pain is often hidden, normalized, or ignored in workplace culture.

### Workers say they would choose a less physically demanding career if given the chance.



**73%**  
of active military respondents



**51%**  
of tradespeople/laborers



**55%**  
of first responders



**48%**  
of retail workers



**55%**  
of food service/hospitality workers



**43%**  
of teachers

### Knee pain is at the center of the issue.

**74%**

report knee pain as the most commonly affected area

**56%**

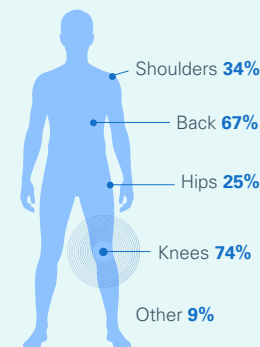
**More than half** experience chronic knee pain\*



#### Did you know?

Knee osteoarthritis (OA) is a leading cause of chronic knee pain, affecting nearly **15 million Americans**.<sup>1</sup>

\*Chronic knee pain is defined as pain lasting three months or longer.



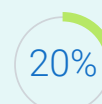
### Workers are relying on what's available – not the alternative options they're interested in.

Pain is often managed with short-term solutions, even as workers show strong interest in long-lasting, non-opioid options that better align with their needs.

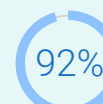
#### Current Pain Management Approaches



rely on over-the-counter (OTC) medications



use prescription opioids to manage pain



would consider a long-lasting, non-opioid treatment option

#### Among workers living with chronic knee pain, these numbers are even higher:



rely on OTC medications



use prescription opioids



would consider a long-lasting, non-opioid treatment option

**Prescription opioid use varies across professions, with higher reported use among frontline roles** such as first responders (25%), food service workers (21%) and labor workers (20%).

1. Deshpande, B. R., Katz, J. N., Solomon, D. H., Yelin, E. H., Hunter, D. J., Messier, S. P., Suter, L. G., & Losina, E. (2016). Number of Persons With Symptomatic Knee Osteoarthritis in the US: Impact of Race and Ethnicity, Age, Sex, and Obesity. *Arthritis care & research*, 68(12), 1743–1750. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acr.22897>



Scan the QR code to learn more about Standing Strong and the survey findings.