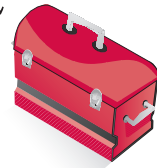


Supervisors Safety Bulletin™ Training Toolbox



This training tool is included with your membership to Supervisors Safety Bulletin – the latest news, rules, updates and training tools for a safe company and a safer workforce.

Preventing back injuries: Awareness is key

■ Recognize the activities that cause back pain – and make adjustments

The purpose of this session is to help minimize your risk of back injury. You'll learn the most common types of back injuries and what you can do to prevent them.

Recognize hazards

The best way to keep your back healthy is to recognize the tasks and activities that are most likely to cause you trouble – then take the proper precautions and steps before an injury can happen.

Safe lifting

Lifting is the most common cause of back injury.

People tend to think that a back injury is related to a single event – such as a single lift that went wrong.

More likely, the injury resulted from a lot of lifts over time.

That last lift was just the straw that broke the camel's back!

Repeated heavy lifting, or trying to lift more than you should, is a sure recipe for back pain.

The column to the right describes the best techniques for a safe lift.

Good posture: Standing

Prolonged standing can cause back trouble, too. If you stand a lot at

work, follow these steps:

1. Stand with your head, shoulders and waist in line.
2. Tuck in your buttocks.
3. Place feet slightly apart, with one foot about an inch or two ahead of the other.
4. Use a box or railing to prop up one foot from time to time.



Good Posture: Sitting

It's a good bet that most people don't know that sitting in a chair can be a hazard.

Remember:

1. Keep lower back pressed against support on chair.
2. Keep head and neck straight.
3. Adjust chair so work surface is elbow high.
4. Keep knees two or three inches beyond the edge of the chair seat.
5. Keep feet flat on floor or footrest.
6. Get up and stretch from time to time.

Over time, practicing these six steps will make a big difference.

4 KEYS TO A SAFE LIFT

Plan the lift: Taking just a moment to think about and discuss what you're about to do and how you plan to do it can save you from an injury.

Be sure to talk about where you'll set the item and how to get it there. Clear a path!

Perform a lift test: Never assume that just because a package is small, it's also light. Try pushing it with your knee or foot. Or just lift an edge.

It's always safer when you can break larger loads down into smaller ones.

Prepare to lift: When you're ready to lift, you should stand close to the load with your feet shoulder-width apart.

Place one foot slightly ahead of the other to help you keep better balance.

Pick it up: Squat down, bending at the knees. Bend as little as possible at your waist to protect your lower back. Tuck in your chin and try to keep your back straight.

Make sure you have a firm grasp on the object. Then, all at once, straighten the legs to complete the lift.

Training Session Quiz

NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

1 If you can recognize the activities that tend to cause back pain, you can make adjustments beforehand to avoid injury.

true false

2 Safety experts say back injury rates are likely to decline as more strong young men enter the workplace.

true false

3 Lifting is one of the most common causes of back pain, which affects more than 1 million U.S. workers every year.

true false

4 A person is far more likely to injure his or her back after doing repetitive lifts over many years than to injure it doing a single lift at one time.

true false

5 When trying to keep good posture while standing, it's best for your back if you keep your knees locked tight and legs straight.

true false

6 When trying to keep good posture while sitting, it's best to keep your lower back two to three inches away from the backrest.

true false

7 When trying to keep good posture while sitting, it's best to keep your feet flat on the floor or propped up on a footrest.

true false

8 After you've safely lifted a heavy item is the best time to starting thinking about where you'll put it down and how you'll get there.

true false

9 The best way to determine how heavy a box or other item might be is to bend over and snatch up a corner with your fingertips

true false

10 To finish a lift, it's best to squat, bending mostly at the knees and avoid bending at your waist. It'll save your back.

true false

ANSWERS

1. *True.* The best way to keep your back healthy is to recognize tasks and activities that can cause you trouble.
2. *False.* Back injury rates are likely to rise as more women enter the workforce.
3. *True.* Lifting is one of the most common causes of back pain and more than 1 million U.S. workers are affected every year.
4. *True.* Many people wrongly believe they hurt their back from a single lift. But it's far more likely that poor lifting techniques over time led to the problem.
5. *False.* Keeping your knees locked and legs straight causes unnecessary strain. Instead, bend slightly at the knees.
6. *False.* It's best to keep your lower back tight against the backrest.
7. *True.* When your chair height is properly adjusted, your feet should rest comfortably and flat on the floor, or firmly propped up on a footrest.
8. *False.* You should always plan where you'll put down a heavy item before you ever lift it.
9. *False.* That's a recipe for a back sprain! Instead, try to slide the item with your knee or foot.
10. *True.* Always bend at the knees – not the waist – when lifting.

STRUCTURE OF THE BACK



Your spine is a column of 33 vertebrae stacked one atop the other. Between each vertebra is a fluid-filled disc that acts like a shock absorber.

The vertebrae are held in place by strong ligaments, muscles and tendons. Picture each vertebra as a donut. The holes line up to form a hollow canal.

The spinal cord, a thick band of nerves, runs down this canal from the brain.

Nerves from the spinal cord branch out through spaces in the vertebral column.