



Back Safety

Strains and sprains are the most common back injuries that result from manual material handling job tasks, such as lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling and bending/twisting. Any job that involves heavy labor or manual material handling may include a high risk for injury on the job. Tasks involving bending and twisting, repetitive motions, carrying or lifting heavy loads, and maintaining fixed positions for a long time may lead to damaged muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves and blood vessels.

Other common causes of back injuries

- Overexertion resulting from improper lifting of heavy and/or awkwardly shaped loads
- Twisting, bending or jerking movements
- Working in awkward positions for a long time
- Highly repetitive lifting and/or twisting
- Lack of physical conditioning or flexibility

Do back belts help prevent back injuries?

Back belts -- the kind you see workers wear when they lift heavy loads -- don't help avoid injury. Unfortunately, they may also give workers a false sense of security and lead to overexertion. When workers wear back belts, their back muscles don't have to work as hard. When their muscles don't work as hard, they get weaker. Weak muscles increase the odds of injuries when back belts are removed. If you use back belts, do not lift loads you would not otherwise lift without a belt. Loosen the belt when not lifting so the muscles get circulation and exercise.

Remember, the best way to prevent back injuries is to practice good ergonomics and learn how to do the job safely.

Discussion questions:

1. Is overexertion a contributing factor to back injuries?
2. What are some other common causes of back injuries?

Meeting note:

Employee comments/concerns: _____

Other safety issues to be addressed on the job/facility: _____

Training record:	Date: _____	Jobsite/Facility: _____	
	Trainer: _____	Title: _____	
Employee name (print)	/ (signature)	Employee name (print)	/ (signature)
_____	/	_____	/
_____	/	_____	/
_____	/	_____	/

(Continue recording signatures on a separate sheet of paper)

Employee Quiz is provided on last page. Answers are: 1. (d), 2. (b), 3. (d), 4. (b), 5. (c), 6. (d)

Toolbox Talks safety information provided by Texas Mutual Insurance Company.



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Planning is the key to keeping your back safe when lifting.

Proper lifting techniques

- Size up the load (load capacity) and determine if you can lift it safely
- Ask for help, or use dollies or other material handling equipment
- Center the load between your legs and shoulders
- Lift with your legs, keeping the object as close to your body as possible
- Keep your back straight as you lift
- Break the load into smaller loads, and take more trips
- Always push; never pull
- Never twist while carrying an object

ALWAYS THINK BEFORE YOU LIFT!



Employee Quiz

Topic: Back Safety

Employee Name: _____

Circle the correct answer below.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Strains and sprains are the most common back injuries that result from manual material handling job tasks, such as:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Liftingb. Pushing and pullingc. Bending/twistingd. All of the above2. Do back belts help prevent back injuries?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Yesb. No3. Another important thing to note about back belts:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. They may give workers a false sense of securityb. They may lead to overexertionc. None of the aboved. A & B | <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. If you use back belts:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. You can still lift loads you would not otherwise lift without a beltb. Be sure to loosen the belt when not lifting so the muscles get circulation and exercisec. None of the aboved. All of the above5. The best way to prevent back injuries:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Practice good ergonomicsb. Learn how to do the job safelyc. All of the above6. Other common causes of back injuries:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Working in awkward positions for a long timeb. Highly repetitive lifting and/or twistingc. Good physical conditioning or flexibilityd. A & Be. A & C |
|--|---|

Training record: Date: _____ Jobsite/Facility: _____
Trainer: _____ Title: _____