



PS Safety & Risk Management, LLC

Providing Safety Solutions for Today's Needs

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Smart Moves For Back Care

As a nurse she lifts patients; he handles heavy materials in construction. What they have in common is working in two industries with the most back injuries.

Back injuries account for one in four workplace injuries and illnesses. Back pain is the second most common health complaint in the nation. Many back injuries are caused by the strain of lifting incorrectly.

The reasons for back pain include stress, overweight, inactive life styles, poorly designed work areas, and poor lifting techniques. Here are some tips for safer lifting:

- Size up the load before you attempt to lift. The weight may be listed on the box or bag. Or try lifting a corner to get an idea of the weight.
- If you are not sure you can handle it alone¹¹ get help from another worker or a lifting device.
- Get as close to the load as possible. Crouch down, keeping your back straight.
- Get a good grip on the load. Use gloves to protect your hands and improve your grip.
- Lift by straightening your legs. The strong muscles in your thighs are much better able to handle the load than your back.
- Plan where you will set the item down, and do so without twisting or bending your back. Check the route you are using to carry your load to its destination. There may be obstacles in your way that will make the job more difficult.
- Try to lift and set down loads at a height between your shoulders and knees. It is harder to lift and control items located higher or lower than that.
- Arrange your work area to minimize lifting and carrying tasks. Storing frequently used materials at waist height can eliminate unnecessary lifting.
- Lift large and awkward loads with help from others. When doing a team lift, one person should be appointed as the leader to tell others when to lift, move and set down the item.

Good posture during all your activities will also help prevent back injuries. When standing or sitting, keep your back relatively straight but not rigid. Maintain the back's natural curves at the base of the neck and the lower back. Don't slump when you sit. If you stand for long periods of time, rest one foot and then the other on a higher surface.

Take care of your back when working and in all areas of your life.

For more information or training needs, contact **PS Safety & Risk Management, Inc.** at (225) 716-0029 or visit us at www.pssafety.net