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Safety Tips: Prevent Back Injuries



All of the parts of our body are important, but through human nature, we take them for granted that we can or will handle any bodily controversy that arises. This is a big fallacy that only surfaces so much of the time when we have an injury to one of these parts. The part that we shall discuss today is our back.

Just about everything we do affects our back and it isn't very resilient. If you experience a back injury, it won't ever be as strong as it originally was. Have you ever stopped to think how many times each day that we push, pull, twist, lift, stretch and otherwise put a strain on our back? Prevention is the key to protecting our backs from injury during any of these activities.

Four out of five adults will experience significant low back pain during their lifetime. Back injuries account for nearly 20% of all injuries and illnesses that occur in the workplace.

TIPS TO AVOID BACK INJURIES- at WORK AND at HOME-

- ✓ Use the correct techniques for bending, lifting and moving loads. (Details to follow later).
- ✓ Exercise your back and abdominal muscles regularly to provide stronger support for the back.
- ✓ Wear comfortable, supportive, low-heeled, non-slip shoes.
- ✓ Maintain proper posture to put less strain on your back.
- ✓ If you're over weight- lose it! Excess weight in the middle throws your back out of alignment, putting an increased burden on it.
- ✓ In an office environment- make sure that your work area has a comfortable height and your office chair offers good support for your lower back.
- ✓ If you work at a computer station, make sure that the work station is a comfortable height and that you can adjust your chair to maintain proper posture while working.

TECHNIQUES FOR SAFE LIFTING-

A large amount of back injuries are related to lifting. There are hosts of jobs that require frequent bending and lifting.

These actions present the greatest risk of back injuries.

Following are some tips to help you bend and lift safely:

- Plan your lift – check the weight of the proposed load by pushing it with your hands or feet to verify the load weight. Make sure that there is ample room to make the lift after you're done checking.
- If the load is too heavy or too awkward to lift soundly - don't attempt it, call for help or get some mechanical help.
- Take your time- don't hurry or use jerky movements.
- Position yourself close to the load. Reaching puts increased strain on your back. Keep the load as close to your body as possible.
- Position your feet the width of your shoulders to provide a balanced and firm base of support.
- Grip the load firmly.
- Bend at your knees- not at your waist.
- Tighten your stomach muscles (don't stop breathing) and keep your back straight, your chin up and lift with your leg muscles as you stand up.
- Avoid twisting as you lift. If you have to turn, start with your feet. Keep your back and upper body in line with your feet as you continue to make the turn.
- If you're placing the load on a shelf, make sure you do so without extending your arms. Move close to the shelf- spread your feet apart- keep your elbows in close to your body as you move the package into the shelf.
- Do not rely on a back belt. It may be more comfortable, but isn't a good substitute for good techniques.
- If the situation arises that you have to lift a person-get a stretcher or body board. It's safer for you and the victim.

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&
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