

Everyone Goes Home “SAFE”!

STRAIN & SPRAIN INJURIES

Strains and sprain injuries are some of the most preventable injuries, but the industry continues to have employees report these injuries. On one site in 2012 alone, there were seventy-six (76) strains/sprains were sustained. In the month of September alone, they had one (1) neck, one (1) shoulder, six (6) back, and two (2) knee strains/sprain injuries. The number one goal is to prevent injuries from occurring at all.



Know the Risks

If you have ever damaged a ligament, the tissue that connects bone to bone, you have had a sprain. You have had a strain if you injured a muscle or muscle tendon, the tissue that connects muscle to bone.

Most workplace sprains and strains affect the back, arms and shoulders; they occur because of poor material-handling techniques. A worker may try to pull or lift a heavy or awkward object without help, or may lift an object while twisting from the waist. If your muscles or ligaments have weakened over time from aging and lack of exercise, you are more apt to get a sprain or strain than if you are physically fit.

Avoid the Risks

Sprains and strains are easy to prevent. By following some simple tips, you can reduce your risk of getting these injuries.

Handle with care



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Many sprains and strains occur because workers lift things that weigh too much or because they left incorrectly. Be sure you know the proper way to lift:

- ✓ Bend the knees, not the back
- ✓ Carry loads close to your body
- ✓ Don't twist
- ✓ Say "I can't." Don't try to move or lift an object that you can't handle. Instead of lifting a 75-pound box, break it down into smaller parts. If something isn't divisible, use a mechanical lifting device, like a wheelbarrow or hoist, or lift it with a co-worker
- ✓ Be sure equipment works. Devices may put sore strain on your body if they don't work properly. If the wheels on carts are not aligned, for example, you could strain your arms, shoulders and back
- ✓ Don't bend or reach upward unnecessarily. Put as much work as you can at waist level.
- ✓ Watch where you walk. If you slip or fall, you may sprain your waist or ankle. Be on the lookout for objects that clutter walkways.
- ✓ Exercise. Stretch during the day to warm your muscles and increase your flexibility
- ✓ Rest the injured part of your body for a few days
- ✓ Apply ice to cold packs periodically during the first three days to reduce swelling and pain. Keep the area elevated and wrap it if possible. If the area remains swollen, see a doctor.

Planning

A key area of planning that is often overlooked is stretching before work and proper lifting techniques. With fall right around the corner, cooler temperatures should be expected which means warming up your muscles before starting the job. When your body is properly warmed up, your muscles and joints are ready for maximum flexibility, which means you can perform each task with PROPER form and minimize risk of injury.

Warm Up & Stretching:

Back:

With feet at shoulder distance apart, bend from the waist, roll shoulders forward and attempt to reach toes with outstretched arms. Bend slightly at the knees then slowly rise to upright position and straighten the shoulders.

Place hands on the hips, raise the chin and bend slightly backward. Repeat both of the above back stretches 5 times.

Upper Body Rotation:

Place hands behind head and slowly rotate the upper body one side, hold 1 – 2 seconds and repeat on the other side. Do Not Bounce or Jerk. Repeat 3-5 times each side.

Knee:

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The knee is the largest joint in the body. Tasks that involve frequent stooping, kneeling, or squatting may increase the risk of injury or developing bursitis, tendonitis or arthritis in the knee.

Floor-level work cannot be eliminated from some jobs, but it is possible to change how the job is done.

Sometimes people work on the floor because it is the only large flat work area available. This increases the amount of stooping or kneeling that is necessary. Rather than stooping to the floor, try to raise the job to waist height using tables, sawhorses to improvise a workbench.

Warm Up & Stretching:

Knee Rotation:

Feet together, knees slightly bent, place hands on the sides of the knees and roll them in a circular motion. Allow the heels to come off the ground. This will work the knees and ankles at the same time. Repeat 10 times.

Shoulder:

Some jobs you need to work overhead, reaching up with one or both arms raised above your shoulders. The head may be tilted back, looking up to see the work. Overhead work puts stress on the shoulders and neck.

Most problems in the shoulder involve the muscles, ligaments, and tendons, rather than the bones. Athletes are especially susceptible to shoulder problems. In athletes, shoulder problems can develop slowly through repetitive, intensive training routines.

Here are some easy shoulder exercises that you can do to strengthen your shoulder muscles and prevent injuries.

Basic shoulder strengthening

Attach elastic tubing to a doorknob at home. Gently pull the elastic tubing toward your body. Hold for a count of five. Repeat five times with each arm. Perform twice a day.

Wall push-ups

Stand facing a wall with your hands on the wall and your feet shoulder-width apart. Slowly perform a push-up. Repeat five times. Hold for a count of five. Perform twice a day.

Shoulder press-ups

Sit upright in a chair with armrest, with your feet touching the floor. Use your arms to slowly rise off the chair. Hold for a count of five. Repeat five times. Perform twice a day.

