

BACK SAFETY FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS



TAKE CARE OF YOUR BACK

This talk discusses proper lifting and posture for workers at construction worksites.

Materials to have on hand:

- Examples of real-life situations that resulted in injuries
- A box of manageable size and weight for lifting practice
- A demonstrator to show correct lifting methods
- A chair to demonstrate correct sitting posture

Items for attendees to consider during talk:

- Do you know safe lifting techniques?
- Do you practice proper health habits?
- If you have not been physically active, do you need to stretch before preparing to lift?

TALK

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, back injuries are the leading source of lost-time occupational injuries. In construction, we are often moving and lifting items that are heavy, which can lead to a strain, spasm, or sprain to the ligaments or muscles of the back. All it takes is one wrong move to injure yourself. For this reason, it is important to remember the key elements to proper lifting.

Preparing to lift—plan ahead

- Determine the load capacity.
- Determine your ability to handle the load.
- Get help if needed. Ask a coworker or use lift equipment.
- Wear gloves to protect your hands if the surface is rough.
- Check your route and make sure you have a clear walkway.

Making the lift

- Center the load between your legs or shoulders.
- Always bend your knees.
- Keep your back straight.
- Lift with your legs—feel your leg muscles doing the work.
- Keep the load close to your body. Hug the object you are lifting.

Moving the load

- Keep your back as vertical as possible.
- Keep the load close to you.
- Don't twist your body—move your feet.

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Talk Date: _____

Location: _____

Supervisor/ _____

Presenter: _____

Attendees: _____

Comments: _____

BACK SAFETY FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

- When lowering your load, bend with your knees and keep your back straight.
- Stand back up using your legs—let the muscles of your legs straighten your knees.

Always follow these lifting rules and you'll avoid hurting your back.

Remember, the only thing you'll prove by lifting more than you should is that your back is a poor substitute for a forklift. Think before you lift—every time!