

Solutions for preventing back injuries

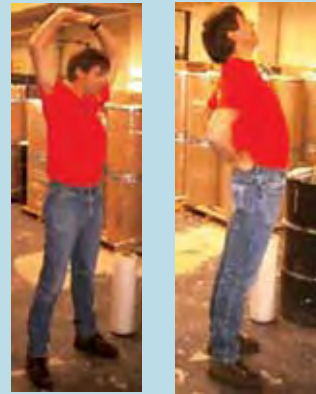
Ergonomics is the concept of adjusting the work to fit the worker. Ergonomics will help you maintain the health of your back and keep you safe from injury by limiting and avoiding overexertion, awkward postures, and repetitive motions.



- The use of thoughtful planning and equipment to move materials instead of your body results in increased productivity.



- Keep the work close to your body and at waist height.



- Take breaks to arch your back and stretch out the muscles. This will increase blood flow and decrease risk of injury.
- Maintain your tools so they work well and your body doesn't have to work harder.



- Ask for help or take several trips to carry material instead of trying to carry it all at one time.

Protect your back and your future



Construction Ergonomics

WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Back Injuries

What puts you at risk?

Overexertion of muscles is the leading cause of time-loss injuries for construction workers. Overexertion can cause tearing or stretching of the tendons, ligaments, or muscles, and occurs because the load being lifted, carried, pushed, pulled, or otherwise handled exceeds the limits of the body.

Your back is a system of muscles, tendons, and nerves made to hold you upright and carry you throughout your day and your life. Regardless of your physical condition, your back has limits as to how long it can be in a bent position and how much it can carry or lift for prolonged periods.

If you overexert your muscles frequently or for extended periods of time, they will become fatigued and prone to injury.

Activities that increase muscle fatigue include

- Force being exerted during the task
- Repetition of tasks during the work day
- Awkward posture of your body



Bending: Overstretches the ligaments and squeezes the discs, causing them to press on different parts of the back, including the nerves. This causes inflammation and pain and can lead to herniation of the disc (when the inner fluid in the disc breaks through). Bending can cause trauma to the back that can lead to lifelong pain and discomfort.



Overexertion: Occurs when muscles are fatigued. This includes lifting and carrying heavy objects, repeating the same motion over and over, or pushing and pulling heavy objects. Above is an example of prolonged awkward posture, force, and duration.

So what can you do?

For more information, call the Oregon OSHA office nearest you.

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