

Back Safety Tips

Reducing Back Pain while Standing

- Design task for frequent movement and periodic stretching
- Provide anti-fatigue mats
- Provide support for one leg
- Maintain the normal curves of the back.
- Do not stand with the legs in a locked position
- Stand with your legs shoulder width apart and one foot slightly in front

Reducing Back Pain while Sitting

- Do not cross legs
- 1 hour of sitting requires a 2 to 3 minute standing break
- Remove large wallets from back pocket
- Sit close to your work
- Provide a well-designed chair
- Place feet comfortably on the floor or footrest

Reducing Back Pain while Driving

- Use extra cushion if the car does not have adequate lumbar support
- Position seat so that the legs and arms are in a comfortable position
- Avoid twisting when getting in or out
- Avoid jumping to ground from high-clearance vehicles

Guidelines for Occasional Manual Materials Handling

- Select the appropriate individuals for the job
- Use proper lifting technique
- Design the job to remove the need for lifting
- Follow the same recommendations for repetitive manual materials handling tasks

Preventing Back Injuries in the Field

- Warm-up exercises before work can help reduce muscle injuries.
- Cut down on carrying. Have materials delivered close to where they will be used.
- Try to store materials at waist height.
- Raise your work to waist level, if you can. Pipefitters use pipe stands.
- Make sure floors and walkways are clear and dry. Slips and trips are a big cause of back injuries.
- Take rest breaks. When you are tired, you can get injured more.
- Use carts, dollies, forklifts, and hoists to move materials - not your back.
- Use carrying tools with handles to get a good grip on odd-shaped loads.
- If materials weigh more than about 50 pounds, do not lift them by yourself. Get help from another worker or use a cart.
- When lifting or carrying materials, keep the load as close to your body as you can.
- Try not to twist, when lifting and lowering materials. Turn your whole body instead.
- Lift and lower materials in a smooth steady way. Try not to jerk the lift.
- When you pick up materials off the ground: -Try supporting yourself by leaning on something while lifting. -Don't bend over; instead, kneel on one knee and pull the load up on to your knee before standing. (Wear knee pads when you kneel.)
- Apprentices get some of the hardest work to do. Being young and strong, they sometimes carry more weight than they should. Make sure apprentices are protected against back injuries, so they don't end up with back problems.
- Work with your employer to decide how the work can be changed to protect you and your co-workers from back injuries. Build back-safety into any training.