

Environmental, Health & Safety News

Soft Tissue Injuries—What, When & How

Soft tissue injuries are a leading cause of injuries in most workplaces and particularly in the construction industry. What is a soft tissue injury? The term “soft tissue” refers to the tendons, ligaments and muscles throughout your body. These injuries are usually due to repetitive stress placed on a joint or muscle, a single blow, or over use. No matter the cause, the result is still the same: pain, swelling, redness and instability.

Some of the most common soft tissue injuries as well as ways to prevent such damage include:

Contusion—A contusion (bruise) is an injury to the soft tissue often produced by a blunt force such as a fall or blow resulting in pain, swelling and discoloration. Treatment for contusions could include: rest, ice, compression, and elevation (R I C E). While most contusions do not require extensive medical attention, more serious contusions may need to be examined by a physician.

Sprain—A sprain is an injury to a ligament and is often caused by twisting a joint. Sprains often affect the ankles, knees, or wrists. The treatment for a sprain includes R I C E. Unless the ligament is torn, which may require surgical repair.

Strain—A strain is an injury to a muscle or tendon, and is often caused by overuse, force, or stretching. The treatment is again R I C E. Surgical repair may be necessary if a tear has occurred.

So how do we prevent soft tissue injuries? There are a number of ways to reduce the risk of injury. Take these precautions to help prevent soft tissue injuries:

- Stretch lightly before using your muscles.
- Take advantage of breaks to stretch muscles that have become tense from continuous sitting and/or exposure to vibration.
- Avoid overexertion.



- Use ladders to reach overhead objects and mechanical equipment to carry and move heavy materials.
- Use proper lifting techniques. Lift with your legs, not your back.
- Use tools properly. Keep most tools between your waist and shoulder height - the “lifting zone”- during use. This gives you the most leverage and allows the strongest muscles to do the work.
- Keep your work area clean and free of hazards. Pick up loose objects from the floor and clean up spills immediately to eliminate tripping and slipping hazards.
- Maintain a total wellness lifestyle that includes physical conditioning, avoidance of tobacco products, weight management, and healthy eating habits.
- Always use three points of contact when climbing.
- Never jump from one level to another.

Soft tissue injuries can be prevented. Do your part to follow these guidelines. Recognize site hazards that can lead to these types of injuries and make the necessary adjustments. Don't risk an injury by ignoring your surroundings.

Why are we talking about soft tissue injuries? Well, 5 of the 7 most costly injuries that have occurred to an employee of imi in the last 12 years fit in this category. Far and away the most frequently occurring reportable injury is in the sprain and strain and contusions classifications. **Safety is never an accident: it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution! It represents the wise choice of many alternatives!!** Make the right choice, the wise choice, the safe choice.

Words of Wisdom:

Why Does a slight tax increase cost \$200 and a substantial tax cut save thirty cents?

**And we all know the answer—
Politics**

Irving Materials, Inc. Environmental, Health and Safety News

Editor: Walt Tharp
Cell: 317-432-9604
Phone: 260-824-3428
Fax: 260-824-4422
E-mail: walt.tharp@irvmat.com



We're Proud of Our Work

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SUMMER TIME CAUTION - KEEP OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES SAFE FROM TICK BITES



Thanks to the National Safety Council and to Mayo-Clinic.com for this information.

Ticks can transmit a variety of illnesses. Lyme disease is the most common. In 2005 the CDC reported 23,000 cases in the United States.

People working and playing outdoors in our area of the US are particularly at risk of tick borne diseases and should take measures to prevent exposure. NIOSH offers these recommendations to protect yourself.

- Wear a hat and light-colored clothing - preferably long-sleeved shirts and long pants with the pant legs tucked into boots or socks.
- Use insect repellent, paying close attention to the product's instructions for use and length of effectiveness.
- Insecticides such as permethrin can be used on clothing for increased protection.
- Whenever possible, avoid working or playing in areas with bushes, tall grass or leaves. When this is not possible, try to control the area as much as possible by cutting down tall grass and clearing leaf litter.
- Check yourself thoroughly for ticks everyday, as ticks can be very small and hard to see. Pay close attention to your hair, underarms and groin.
- If found, immediately remove ticks with fine-tipped tweezers. Grip the tick firmly and pull away from your

body in a steady motion. Wash the area well with soap and warm water.

- If possible, seal the tick in a jar and keep it for a week or two. Your doctor may want to see the tick if you develop symptoms of illness after a tick bite.
- Wash clothing and dry them in a hot dryer to kill any ticks that may be in the material.

See your doctor if you develop: A rash, a fever, muscle aches, joint pain and inflammation, swollen lymph nodes, or flu-like symptoms. If possible, bring the tick with you to your doctor's appointment.

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you develop: A severe headache, difficulty breathing, paralysis, chest pain or heart palpitations.

*I hope you will have or
have had a safe and
joyous 4th of July cele-
bration!*

