

**E n v i r o n m e n t a l , H e a l t h
a n d S a f e t y N e w s**

August 2012

We ' r e P r o u d o f O u r W o r k



Something to Think About!!

E2DHS

Everyone, Every Day, Home Safe!

Welcome to the new year, 2012
Deeper into SAFETY AWARENESS we should delve.

Back Pain at Work

A look at recent employee injuries shows a clear indication of an increase in the number of employees suffering back injuries. Please don't forget to SLAM every task that you undertake. SLAM means: Stop, Look, Analyze, Manage. This applies to manual handling of materials and equipment. Seek assistance from someone else or a mechanical means when required to move a heavy object. Also review the following tips from the Mayo Clinic.

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Whether it's dull and achy or sharp and stabbing, back pain can make it hard to concentrate on your job. Unfortunately, many occupations — such as nursing, construction and factory work — can place significant demands on your back. Even routine office work can cause or worsen back pain. Understand what causes back pain and what you can do to prevent it.

What are the common causes of back pain at work?

A number of factors can contribute to back pain at work. For example:

Force. Exerting too much force on your back — such as by lifting or moving heavy objects — can cause injury.

Repetition. Repeating certain movements can lead to muscle fatigue or injury, particularly if you're stretching to the limit of your range of motion or using awkward body positioning.

Posture. Slouching exaggerates your back's natural curves, which can lead to muscle fatigue and injury.

Stress. Pressure at work can increase your stress level and lead to muscle tension and tightness, which can contribute to or worsen

back pain.

What can I do to avoid back pain at work?

You can take steps to prevent back pain and injuries at work. For example:

Include physical activity in your daily routine. Maintaining a healthy weight minimizes stress on your back. For most healthy adults, the Department of Health and Human Services recommends at least 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity — preferably spread throughout the week — and strength training exercises at least twice a week. Combine aerobic exercise, such as swimming or walking, with exercises that strengthen and stretch your back muscles and abdomen.

- **Pay attention to posture.** If you stand for long periods at work, occasionally rest one foot on a stool or small box. While you stand, hold reading material at eye level. To promote good posture when sitting, choose a chair that allows you to rest both feet flat on the floor while keeping your knees level with your hips. If necessary, prop your feet with a foot stool or other support. If the chair doesn't support your lower back's curve, place a rolled towel or small pillow behind your lower back. Remove your wallet or cell phone from your back pocket when sitting, to prevent putting pressure on your buttocks or lower back.

- **Minimize hazards.** Falls can seriously injure your back. Remove anything from your work space that might cause you to trip. Consider wearing low-heeled shoes with nonslip soles.

- **Lift properly.** When lifting and carrying a heavy object, lift with your knees and tighten your core muscles. Hold the object close to your body and lift it between your legs. Maintain the natural curve of your back. If an object is too heavy to lift safely, find someone to help you.

Concluded on back!



