

AVOIDING BACK INJURIES CHECKLIST

Tips to keep your back healthy

Your back bears amazing pressure. That doesn't mean you should take it for granted. Your back is also delicate. More than 250,000 workers injure their muscles by using improper materials handling methods each year. Back injuries can also happen when climbing in and out of trucks. Translated into lost time from work, such aches and pains cost nearly \$70 million a year, most of which is spent on pain medications. Treat your back well to prevent injuries.

Preventing back injuries can be easy

Many back injuries can be prevented. Here are a few common sources of back pain:

1. Poor materials handling techniques
2. Slipping while climbing in and out of truck cabs
3. Build-up of muscle tension and strain.

If your job allows little movement, it is important to watch your posture and change your working position often. Rest the muscles that are in constant use to avoid tension.

Checklist

1. Are you facing the load you're going to pick up? Avoid twisting your body.
2. Have you determined the center of gravity in order to keep the load balanced?
3. Have you checked for nails or other protrusions that could cause cuts or other injuries?
4. Did you squat down to lift with your knees, not your back? Avoid bending over to pick up objects.
5. Is the load close to your body? Are you carrying it at knuckle height?
6. Did you check to make sure your path is free of obstructions or slipping hazards?
7. Do you know your limits and get help for heavy or awkward loads?
8. Do you watch for pinch points before setting the load down?
9. Do you use handgrips when climbing in or out of a truck cab?
10. Did you make sure the step-ups to the cab are dry and clear?
11. Do you have an ergonomic work station?

Thought Provokers

1. What conditions can you think of at our workplace that could cause a back injury?
2. Are there any specific points or problems you wish to discuss?