

1998 Labor Day CheckList

How to Avoid Low Back Injuries in the Workplace

Action Areas	✓ Employers	✓ Employees
<p>WORKPLACE <i>Lifting or heavy physical Work</i></p>	<p>Provide mechanical assistance devices, tables or pallets to allow waist-height lifting.</p> <p>Encourage employees to get assistance in moving bulky/heavy loads, or to make loads smaller.</p> <p>Schedule regular rest breaks for employees doing heavy physical work; ensure breaks are taken.</p> <p>Teach good lifting and material-handling techniques; regularly review lifting techniques to reinforce adherence to safe habits.</p>	<p>Keep lifted objects close to body at waist level. Evenly balance loads with both arms.</p> <p>Get help if the load is too bulky/heavy to lift alone, or split into smaller/lighter loads.</p> <p>Take rest breaks to stand up, change position, and stretch. Break tasks into shorter segments.</p> <p>Avoid twisting, bending, and reaching while lifting. Rotate entire body instead.</p> <p>If lifting or moving a load, bend with the knees, not the back.</p>
<p><i>Awkward postures</i></p>	<p>Conduct ergonomics reviews of workstation design/ equipment to ensure that each employee is sitting and moving in the safest positions.</p> <p>Create good workplace design to minimize unnecessary bending, twisting, or reaching.</p> <p>Encourage employees to maintain good posture and use techniques/equipment that provide the best back support.</p>	<p>Monitor workstation/habits to incorporate ergonomically correct ways to sit/stand/move. Make sure work surface is at comfortable height.</p> <p>Sit and walk with good posture, keeping head high, chin tucked in, and toes straight ahead.</p> <p>Alternate between standing and sitting tasks. During long periods of standing, rest one foot on a low stool. When sitting, rest both feet flat on floor.</p> <p>Use a chair with good back support.</p>

<i>Whole-body vibration</i>	<p>Use equipment that reduces or eliminates vibration.</p> <p>Require frequent breaks from/rotate tasks involving whole-body vibration.</p> <p>Teach and reinforce good habits/safety techniques to employee drivers.</p>	<p>Keep machinery in good repair to eliminate extra vibration from poor alignment/function.</p> <p>When driving, move seat forward to keep knees level with hips. Sit straight; keep both hands on wheel. Use a lumbar support for lower back.</p>
<i>Environment</i>	<p>Provide a clean workplace free of obstacles, spills, and elevation changes with good lighting/traffic patterns for materials movement. Install non-skid, cushioned floors.</p> <p>Regularly review accident/injury records to identify problem areas and eliminate hazards.</p> <p>Encourage early evaluation and treatment of back injuries and other illnesses.</p> <p>Provide ongoing programs to assist employees in learning how to reduce stress levels.</p>	<p>Ensure lighting in work area causes no glare or excessive shadowing.</p> <p>Maintain firm footing and wear comfortable, low-heeled, non-slip shoes.</p> <p>Report and/or work to eliminate any potential hazards in the workplace.</p> <p>See a doctor if you have a back injury or other illness. Follow doctor's treatment recommendations.</p> <p>Learn/use relaxation techniques to manage stress on and off the job.</p>
LIFESTYLE <i>Fitness</i>	<p>Provide time/facilities for employee exercise; create incentive programs that encourage employee fitness.</p>	<p>Exercise regularly to keep back/abdominal muscles strong/flexible and build activity tolerance.</p>
<i>Diet</i>	<p>Offer healthy food options in on-site dining facilities.</p> <p>Supply water coolers/fountains in workplace.</p>	<p>Choose healthy foods/maintain proper weight.</p> <p>Drink plenty of water for good hydration.</p>
<i>Smoking</i>	<p>Sponsor smoking cessation programs/discourage smoking in workplace.</p>	<p>Avoid smoking, which reduces blood/fluid flow to spine.</p>
<i>Sleep</i>	<p>Use accepted guidelines for safe shift work practices.</p>	<p>Get sufficient sleep daily; go to sleep and awaken at same time</p>

	Educate workforce on importance of adequate sleep for optimum functioning and accident prevention.	every day. Use a firm mattress. Sleep on side or back.
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