

Lifting Techniques: Avoiding Back Injuries

The most common cause of lower back pain is sprains and strains. You can injure your back by improper lifting, falls, auto accidents, and sports activities. Of these, lifting improperly is the largest single cause of back injury.

Problems with the lower back are a frequent cause of lost work time and compensation. A 1994 Bureau of Labor Statistics report said that nearly 400,000 injuries (17 percent of all occupational injuries or illnesses) were caused from overexertion in lifting. Here are some things that can go wrong:

- Strains and sprains can result from injury to muscles and ligaments that support the back.
- Ruptured or herniated disks can press on the nerves of the spinal cord.
- Chronic tension or stress can result in muscle spasms.
- Pain from other organs, such as the kidneys and prostate, can result in nagging back pain.
- Other factors can contribute to back pain, such as poor posture, poor physical condition, and stress.

How to Prevent Back Injuries and Reduce Back Pain?

- Practice good lifting techniques not only at work, but also at home.
- Plan ahead when lifting jobs are necessary.
- Get help to lift objects that are too heavy.
- Never twist or turn suddenly while carrying a heavy load.
- Keep the load as close as possible to you when lifting.
- Be aware of proper posture when sitting, standing, or reclining.
- Drink water to prevent back pain.
- Follow a sensible diet and exercise program (consult with your doctor or medical provider for guidance).

Think, Act, and Be Safe!

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Send comments or questions to:

isrisafety@isri.org

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