

Back Safety



Session Objectives

You will be able to:

- Understand how back injuries occur
- Prevent back injuries
- Use proper lifting, load carrying, and unloading techniques
- Think intelligently about your back

Back Injury Statistics

- 80% of Americans will have a back injury that requires medical attention
- Back injuries are the second most common cause of lost work time, next to the common cold
- Injured backs are often subject to reinjury
- In addition to missed work, there may be a lifetime of pain

Why Back Injuries Occur

- The back has many interactive parts
 - Vertebrae, spinal cord, and disks
 - Muscles, ligaments, and tendons
- Injured when torn, stretched, bruised, or cut

Types of Back Injuries

- Strain
- Sprain
- Bulging disk
- Herniated disk

General Causes of Back Injury

Usually a combination of causes

- Poor posture
- Unconditioned back
- Excess weight and potbellies
- Bad lifting techniques

Activities That Can Cause Back Injury

- Reaching
- Bending over
- Sitting
- Poor lifting technique

Back Injury Conditions and Causes

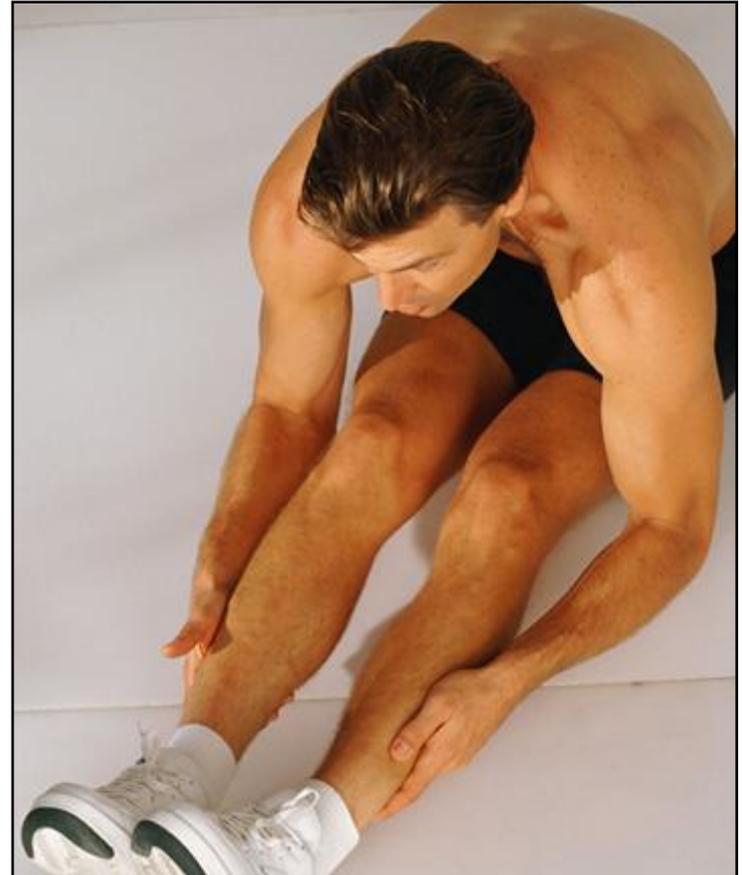
- Any questions about why back injuries occur?
- The causes of back injuries?

Injury Prevention— Maintain Posture

- Maintain the back's natural curves
- Stand straight
- Sit properly
- Improve your posture
- Stretch regularly

Injury Prevention— Condition Your Back

- Physical conditioning
- Stay flexible and limber
- Lose excess weight



Injury Prevention— Exercises

- Walk regularly
- Stretch and bend
- Do sit-ups
- Practice leg lifts
- Practice squats



Safe Practices—Use Lifting Equipment

- Powered equipment such as forklifts, powered carts, and electric pallet jacks
- Hand trucks, carts, pallet jacks
- Cranes and hoists
- Conveyors



Have a Safe Lifting Plan

- Size up the load
 - Weight, shape, and size
- Clear the path
 - Objects
 - Tight doorways or corners
- Unloading zone

Lift Properly

- Stand close with a wide stance
- Bend at the knees
- Pull the load close and grip it
- Tighten stomach, lift your head
- Rise using your legs



Lift Bags Properly

- Squat down next to the bag
- Grab it at opposite corners
- Lift it up to your thigh or waist
- Stand up
- Put the load on your shoulder



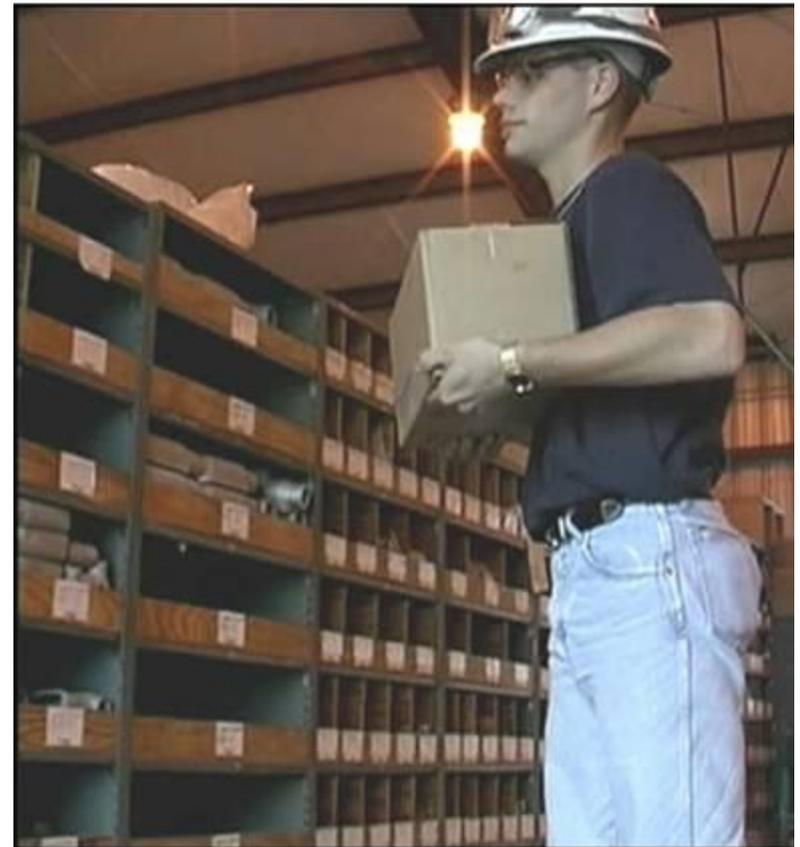
Team Lifting

- Designate a person to lead the lift
- Lift at the same time
- Keep the load level
- Slowly unload together



Carry the Load Properly

- Make sure you can see
- Take small, stable steps
- Do not twist your back



Unload Properly

- Squat down with the load
- Do not bend your back over the load
- Be careful of fingers



Handling Overhead Loads

- Shoulders level with the load
- Slide the load close
- Use your legs

Handling Long Loads

- Pick up one end
- Place the balance point on your shoulder
- Watch the ends

Think About Your Back

- Don't be lazy
- Think long term
- Don't try to lift too much
- Consider your back in all things that you do

What's Wrong Here?

- Moving heavy boxes wearing back belt
- Trained in lifting techniques
- Rotates box on bottom edge
- Box falls as he grabs for it
- Strains his back



What's Wrong Here? (cont.)

- Was the box too heavy?
- Was the box too big to move alone?
- Were proper lifting techniques followed?
- Was the back belt a factor?



Injury Prevention and Safe Practices

- Any questions about lifting techniques?
- Any questions about carrying loads, unloading, overhead loads, or long loads?

Key Points to Remember

- Maintain back posture
- Exercise regularly
- Use available lifting equipment, and have a lifting plan
- Use your legs; bend them when lifting
- Always think about your back