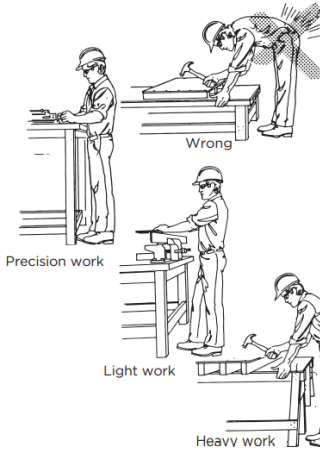


Nearly 25% of all lost-time injuries in construction are related to the back. More than half of these injuries result from lifting excessive weight, or incorrectly lifting.

The best way to prevent injuries is to practice proper posture, correct lifting techniques, and get regular exercise.



Work Height

Maintaining proper posture is always important while working. Try to maintain a comfortable position, working between knee and shoulder level. When possible, utilize a workbench to bring the work to you. Stable workbenches allow workers to work at an optimal height.

Working overhead, or above shoulder height places a lot of strain on your back muscles. Ensure that you are not working in these positions for a prolonged period.

Lifting and Material Handling

When lifting, carrying, or performing other material handling tasks, proper technique is essential.

1. Plan your move:
 - a. Size up what needs to be moved and ensure that the pathway is clear.
 - b. Ask for help as needed
 - c. Where available, use a dolly, cart, or forklift.
2. Use a wide stance with one foot ahead of the other.
3. Hold the load as closely to your body as possible.
4. Tighten your core as the lift begins.
5. When lifting, keep your low back in its neutral position.
6. Pick up your feet when turning, don't twist your back.
7. Lower the load slowly, maintaining the curve in your lower back, bending your knees to reach the ground.

Lifting Tips

- Split large, heavy loads into smaller loads, and make more trips. Smaller loads place less stress on your back than trying to carry more than you are capable of.
- When storing materials, keep heavier items lower and lighter items higher. It is best if materials can be stored at waist height as items stored below this level can increase the amount of stress on your back.
- Remove clutter from the workplace, pushing a pallet jack is easier when its not caught on an old board left on the floor.
- Do not try to catch falling objects. Your muscles may not have the time to properly protect the spine.
- Avoid one hand carrying where possible, but if you must, distribute the weight by lifting your other arm.
- Whenever possible, use a cart to move heavier items.



Remember

Your back goes everywhere with you, protect it within the workplace, and at home.

Taking care in how you work will save you from a future of back pain.