LOSS CONTROL NEWSLETTER

August 2019

Stand Up to Back Injuries

Back injuries are very common and account for more days away from work than any other sickness, besides the common cold. These injuries can result in a lifetime of pain, and an initial injury increases the likelihood of re-injury.

Some of the most common types of back injury that occur include:

- **Strain**: Injury of a muscle or tendon caused by overstretching or tearing
- **Sprain**: Injury of a ligament caused by overstretching or tearing
- **Herniated disk**: When a disk begins to leak the cushioning fluid

There are many factors that contribute to back injuries, including poor posture when sitting or standing, being overweight, age and underlying medical conditions.

Exercising and doing muscle-strengthening exercise can help prevent back injuries. However, even if your back is in good physical condition, using poor lifting techniques can lead to injury.

HAVE A PLAN

Before lifting anything, assess the load. Try to estimate how much it weighs and determine if you will be able to grip it. Also consider if you will be able to see over it, and if it requires a team lift.

Never attempt to lift anything that is too heavy or awkward for you to carry. It is important to make sure your path is clear before carrying the load, and you should also have a plan as to how you will unload safely.

LIFTING TECHNIQUE

There are different lifting techniques depending on the type, size and shape of the item. For a box, first stand close to the object with feet shoulder-width apart and your toes pointing outward. Bend at the knees and hips and try to maintain your body's natural curve. Pull the load close to you, tighten your stomach, and grip the box firmly. Finally, when you're ready to lift, use your legs and keep your back straight.

If you are lifting a box with another person, designate the leader who will announce all directions. Team members should lift simultaneously and keep the load level (even if you are going up or down stairs).

LIFTING EQUIPMENT

Lifting equipment can be helpful in preventing injury, but you must be careful to select the right equipment for the job and use it properly. Some equipment that may be available to use includes forklifts, powered carts and electric pallet jacks. Only use this equipment if you have been properly trained and are authorized to do so.

Hand trucks are useful for many situations, but should never be loaded too high or with more weight than you can safely manage. Push the hand truck instead of pulling and let the truck carry the weight so you only have to push and steer.

Auto-Owners INSURANCE
LIFE • HOME • CAR • BUSINESS

Feeling Thirsty? What You Need to Know About Dehydration

Summer is here and that means you may be spending your days working in hot weather conditions. While fluid intake required to keep your body functioning varies with each person, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommends that males drink 3.7 liters (about 15.6 cups) and females drink 2.7 liters (about 11.4 cups) of water each day.

Our bodies need water for many critical functions, including regulating body temperature, lubricating joints, and getting rid of waste. It is important to know that when it is hot outside and you are exerting yourself physically, you need more liquid to avoid dehydration and to ensure that your body maintains proper function. You should drink small amounts of water frequently, and drink even when you don't feel thirsty.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has recommended that in high-risk conditions (when the heat index is 103°F to 115°F), workers should drink 4 cups of water every hour. In higher humidity climates, the heat index can soar even when the measured temperature is more moderate. For instance, in 65% humidity, a temperature of only 90°F has a heat index (i.e., "feels like") of 103°F.

Combustible Dust

Not all dusts are combustible, but those that are pose a risk to workers. Certain types of powdered material can, in high enough concentration, result in a flash fire or explosion. A secondary explosion may also occur if the first explosion disturbs more dust, creating a dangerous situation.

Combustible dusts are present in many different workplaces, including grain elevators, chemical plants, coal-power plants, and woodworking facilities. You should be aware if you work with any combustible dusts, or if any of the processes you use may create dust, such as cutting, grinding or polishing.

Combustible dusts include many agricultural products that are powdered (e.g., malt, cornmeal, flour), chemical dusts (e.g., calcium acetate, adipic acid), metal dusts (e.g., aluminum, magnesium), and plastic dusts (e.g., epoxy resin, polyacrylamide).

There should be dust-control measures in your work area to ensure that no fugitive dusts can accumulate. Work areas should also be cleaned frequently to prevent accumulation.

If you have any questions or need assistance regarding workplace safety, please contact your independent insurance agent or the Auto-Owners Loss Control HelpLine at 855.586.5388, or send an email to LossControlSupport@aoins.com.