



SAFETY & HEALTH NEWSLETTER

3/31/2023

Back Injuries and Prevention

Ways to Prevent Back Injuries

Eliminate– The best way to protect yourself against back injuries is to eliminate as many lifts as possible during the workday. Use equipment such as dollies whenever possible. Break down large or heavy objects that pose a hazard when lifting into smaller, safer loads when possible.

Engineering Controls– Set up work areas that are ergonomically friendly. Install proper shelving and set up storage areas that keep objects and lifts within an optimal range. Keeping objects within the proper range helps keep you from making awkward or dangerous lifts that can result in a sprain.

Administrative Controls– Use the buddy system when lifting any awkward or heavy objects. Also, always select employees who are physically capable of making the lifts of a task before the work begins.

Personal protective equipment -such as back supports or back belts have not shown to be overly effective in preventing back injuries. These devices often create a false sense of security when completing lifts. Individuals should focus on stretching and using proper lifting techniques over using a back belt to keep them safe.

Back injuries are some of the most prevalent and hardest-to-prevent injuries on the job. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than one million workers suffer back injuries each year, and back injuries account for one of every five workplace injuries or illnesses. We need to give our backs extra focus to avoid being in this statistic.

Back injuries often occur when:

- An individual is lifting up an object
- Using improper lifting techniques, such as lifting with the back and not the legs
- Lifting an object that is too heavy for the individual
- Twisting while lifting or carrying objects
- Repetitive lifting during a work task

