

News & Notes

BACK INJURIES

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. Further, one-fourth of all lost time workers' compensation claims involve back injuries, costing employers billions of dollars. These figures do not begin to reflect the pain and suffering employees experience as a result of their injuries.

Back injuries are exceedingly painful. They are difficult to heal, and they have an effect upon everything a person does. If you have ever experienced a back injury, you already know this. What you may not know is that after you have experienced one back injury, you are much more likely to experience another one sometime during your lifetime. It is important to learn techniques and procedures that may help you prevent a reoccurrence.

If, on the other hand, you are lucky enough to have never injured your back, you can do yourself a big favor by learning how to prevent one in the future. By learning proper lifting techniques and the basics of back safety, you may be able to save yourself a lot of pain.... and a lifetime of back problems.

Prevent back injuries by treating your back as the precision instrument that it is - requiring proper care, maintenance and use. After all, you only have one back. Always handle it with care.



"Do you know you move your lips when you text?"

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH

- 1) What's the difference between Thanksgiving and April Fool's Day?
- 2) What monster plays the most April Fool's jokes?
- 3) What would you get if you crossed Halloween with April 1?
- 4) What is the easiest way to double your money?
- 5) What goes up and never comes down?

Answers on page 2 Safety Bits & Pieces

April is



Safety Matters



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Back Safety Quiz

How much do you know about back safety?

Take the following back safety quiz to see how much you know about back safety.

- 1) Back injuries account for one of every five workplace injuries or illnesses. **True False**
- 2) Once you have injured your back, you are very likely to re-injure it at some point in the future. **True False**
- 3) Which of the following might be considered a contributing factor for back injuries?
 - a) Poor physical condition
 - b) Stress
 - c) Poor posture
 - d) All of the above
- 4) Sitting in one position for long periods of time does not place any stress on the back. **True False**
- 5) Which are generally recommended as the best sleeping positions for your back?
 - a) On your stomach or back (w/ legs level)
 - b) On your side (w/ knees slightly bent) or back (w/ pillow under knees)
- 6) The "safe lifting zone" is
 - a) Between the floor and your knees
 - b) Above your head
 - c) Between your shoulders and your waist
 - d) At arm's length from your body
- 7) Rather than using your back like a crane, it is better to allow your legs to do the work by bending at the knees while lifting. **True False**
- 8) It is best to avoid twisting at the waist when carrying or lifting a heavy load. **True False**
- 9) When carrying an awkward load, you want the heaviest part of the load to be furthest from your body. **True False**
- 10) Taking frequent, short (micro) breaks can be beneficial to your back, particularly when working in awkward positions. **True False**

Answers: 1) True; 2) True. Statistically, once you have injured your back, there is an 80% chance that you will re-injure it; 3) d; 4) False. Sitting can place tremendous stress on the back, particularly if you are leaning forward unsupported; 5) b; 6) c; 7) True; 8) True; 9) False. When carrying an awkward load, you want the heaviest part of the load to be closest to your body; 10) True.

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

Follow these spring cleaning safety tips:

- Be careful when moving large pieces of furniture and appliances.
- Follow all safety rules when using ladders and step stools.
 - Be careful when walking on wet surfaces.
 - Keep walkways, landings, and stairs clean of all obstructions, including boxes, bags and other clutter.
- Don't carry too many items at one time, especially on stairs. Always keep a hand free in order to use the stair railing.
- Always follow cleaning product safety instructions and recommendations.
 - Wear a mask when cleaning dusty areas.
- Do not leave buckets filled with water around your home.
- Put away all cleaning supplies when you are finished.



Safety Bits & Pieces

BODY MANAGEMENT FOR YOUR BACK'S SAKE

It's important to know your body's limitations, and it's important to be aware of your body position at all times. Learn to recognize those situations where your back is most at risk: bending, lifting, reaching, twisting, etc. Then take measures to avoid an injury.

Stretch first - If you know that you're going to be doing work that might be hard on your back, take the time to stretch your muscles before starting, just like a professional athlete would do before a workout. This will help you avoid painful strains and sprains.

Slow down - If you're doing a lot of heavy, repetitive lifting, take it slowly if you can. Allow yourself more recovery time between lifts, as well. Don't overdo it.

Rest your back - Take frequent, short (micro) breaks. Stretch. If you've ever been working in an awkward position for a long time, then stood up and felt stiff and sore, you know you've been in that position too long, and your body is now protesting. Taking a one minute stretch break every now and then can help you avoid that.

Sleep on a firm mattress. - Also, the best sleeping position for many people is either on the back with the knees slightly elevated (by a pillow), or on the side with knees slightly bent.

Get in shape - Strengthen your stomach muscles, lose a little weight, increase your flexibility.

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH ANSWERS

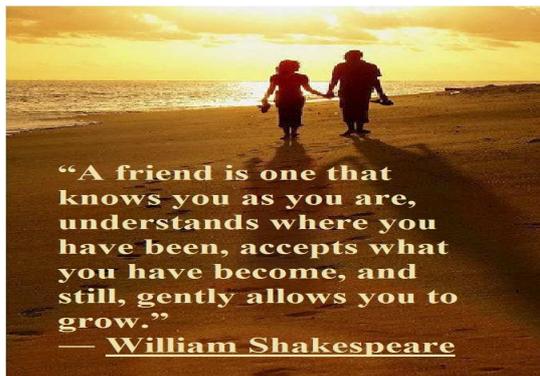
- 1) On one you're thankful and on the other you're prankful!
- 2) Prankenstein!
- 3) April Ghouls Day!
- 4) Put it in front of a mirror, of course!
- 5) Your age!

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...



"I'd like to participate in gym class, but I'm afraid I'll get overheated and contribute to the global warming problem."

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH



"A friend is one that knows you as you are, understands where you have been, accepts what you have become, and still, gently allows you to grow."
— **William Shakespeare**

How to Prevent Back Injuries

The best way to prevent back injuries is to develop habits that reduce the strain placed on the back. There are some basic things you can do to help.

1. Avoid Lifting and Bending Whenever You Can

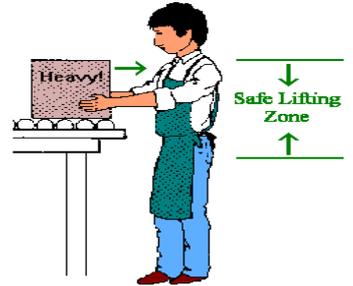
Anytime you can spare your back the stress and strain of lifting and bending, do so! If you don't use your back like a lever, you avoid putting it under so much potentially damaging force.

Place objects up off the floor. If you can set something down on a table or other elevated surface instead of on the floor, do it so you won't have to reach down to pick it up again.

Raise / lower shelves. The best zone for lifting is between your shoulders and your waist. Put heavier objects on shelves at waist level, lighter objects on lower or higher shelves.

Use carts and dollies to move objects, instead of carrying them yourself.

Use cranes, hoists, lift tables, and other lift-assist devices whenever you can.



2. Use Proper Lifting Procedures

You can't always avoid lifting, but there are ways to reduce the amount of pressure placed on the back when you do so. By bending the knees, you keep your spine in a better alignment, and you essentially take away the lever principle forces. Instead of using your back like a crane, you allow your legs to do the work.

Follow these steps when lifting:

1. Take a balanced stance with your feet about a shoulder-width apart. One foot can be behind the object and the other next to it.
2. Squat down to lift the object, but keep your heels off the floor. Get as close to the object as you can.
3. Use your palms (not just your fingers) to get a secure grip on the load. Make sure you'll be able to maintain a hold on the object without switching your grip later.
4. Lift gradually (without jerking) using your leg, abdominal and buttock muscles and keeping the load as close to you as possible. Keep your chin tucked in so as to keep a relatively straight back and neck line.
5. Once you're standing, change directions by pointing your feet in the direction you want to go and turning your whole body. Avoid twisting at your waist while carrying a load.
6. When you put a load down, use these same guidelines in reverse.

Also follow these lifting tips:

Reduce the amount of weight lifted. If you're moving a bunch of books, better to load several small boxes than one extremely heavy load.

Use handles and lifting straps.

Get help if the shape is too awkward or the object is too heavy for you to lift and move by yourself!

From the State of Delaware's Office of Highway Safety...

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

With the majority of people using cell phones, it's no surprise that crashes involving drivers using cell phones has increased overall. Since Delaware passed the Electronic Communications Device law (Cell phone law) in 2011, more than 64,000 drivers have been issued citations. In Delaware, male drivers are responsible for about 70% of all crashes. However, in crashes involving a cell phone, female drivers are responsible more than 40% of the time.

- Crashes involving drivers using cell phones increases around lunchtime and continues to increase with the sharpest rise during the evening rush hour.
- Between 2012 and 2015, 62% of cell phone related crashes occurred in New Castle County, 16% in Kent, and 22% in Sussex.

Reduce Your Chances of an Accident - Suggestions to avoid distracted driving:

- **Out of Sight, Out of Mind.** When you're in the car, put your phone where you can't get it, in a place where you won't even be tempted to look for it. No phone. No texting.
- **Silence is Golden.** Turn those notifications off. The less you hear your phone, the less tempted you'll be to respond while you're driving.
- **Find your App.** An app can help you stop texting and driving. Download your favorite and forget about it in the car. Consider an app like AT&T's DriveMode, which can be enabled to silence your phone while driving.
- **Designate a Texter.** Borrow thumbs from a friend. Or lend yours to a friend. Passengers get the privilege of texting while the car is in motion.