

INJURY STATISTICS

The construction industry has a high rate of back injuries. Of all construction-related injuries that occur each year, 25% of them are back injuries. Repeated injury to your back can cause permanent damage and end your career. Most back problems are low-back injuries, including sprains and strains from lifting, lowering, carrying, pushing and pulling materials. Injuries can be reduced by planning, changing how work is done, and practicing back-saving techniques.



TIPS TO AVOID INJURY

MOVE CAREFULLY

- When lifting or carrying materials, keep the load close to your body.
- Don't twist when lifting and lowering materials. Turn your whole body instead.
- Lift and lower materials in a smooth steady way. Try not to jerk the lift.
- If available, use carts, dollies, forklifts, or hoists to move materials.

TEAM LIFTING

- If materials weigh more than 50 pounds, get help or use material handling equipment.
- Plan the lift. One person should take responsibility for giving direction to lift, turn, and set down.
- Discuss the task, route, and approach before starting.
- Lift and lower in the same manner. Lift slowly, powering the lift with the legs – not back muscles.

PRE-WORK STRETCHING

Just as professional athletes warm up prior to a game, workers should stretch and warm up their bodies as well. Pre-work stretching, commonly known as *stretch and flex*, is important to prevent sprains and strains at work. Stretching is important in maintaining the muscle's pliability and length. When a muscle shortens, the ability to perform a task involving that muscle decreases, which can then increase the risk of injury.

Be sure to exercise good judgment and understand your physical capabilities. Avoid motions that may aggravate previous injuries or other physical conditions. Have a discussion with your medical provider and company before participating in any stretch & flex program.

