



Back injuries are some of the most prevalent and hardest-to-prevent injuries on the job. According to the statistics, more than one million workers suffer back injuries each year, and back injuries account for one of every five workplace injuries or illnesses. These types of injuries account for a large majority of worker's compensation claims every year.

Protect Your Back

There are many ways you can protect yourself from back injuries on the job. The best option in preventing back injuries due to lifting is to eliminate as many manual lifts as possible. This can be achieved by proper preplanning of work, proper setup of work areas, as well as using a piece of equipment such as a forklifts to complete the lifting. If elimination, is not possible there are still many other options for preventing back injuries.

Take Proper Precautions

- Ensure you know the weight and center of gravity of the object prior to picking it up.
- Ensure your path is clear to where you have to take the object as well as where you have to set it down prior to beginning the lift.
- Take breaks as needed.
- Set the object on an elevated surface whenever you take breaks or when possible for its final resting spot. This will make the lift much safer for the next person who has to pick up the object.
- Get a coworker to help lift the object if it is too heavy or awkward to lift alone.

Use the Proper Form When Lifting

- Carry items close to your body to reduce strain.
- Do not twist when lifting or carrying an object.
- Use your legs instead of your back when picking an object up off of the ground.

Summary

It is true that back injuries can be difficult to prevent on the job, but it is possible with proper preplanning along with implementing safeguards when lifting does need to be completed. Take into consideration the safety measures mentioned in this safety talk. Think about the lifts you complete in your work and how you can eliminate risk of injury during these lifts.

Discussion points:

1. What are some scenarios where an employee can injure their back at our facility?
2. How can we reduce the risk of injury during these work tasks?

