



## Back Safety – *Lifting & Moving...Getting The Job Done!*

One of the most common injuries that can occur is one of the most serious injuries that can be prevented – **BACK INJURIES**. Back injuries are serious, debilitating, painful injuries that will affect your life in a very negative way. Just use a few simple rules to treat your back in the best possible way – it will thank you! (By Jody Warner, Cambridge Risk Control Supervisor)

### TAKE CARE OF YOUR BACK – IT'S THE ONLY ONE YOU'VE GOT!

#### 2003 Dates To Remember:

##### January:

Plan Your Safety Training Now!  
Call Jody For Training Ideas!  
312-381-8208

##### February:

9-15, National Child Passenger Safety Week

##### March:

16-20 Poison Prevention Week  
Workplace Eye Safety Month  
Save Your Vision Month

##### April:

Sports Eye Safety Month  
6-12 Intl Building Safe Week  
7-11 Workzone Aware. Week  
21-25 Window Safety Week  
21-25 Playground Safety Week

##### May:

Clean Air Month  
Melanoma Awareness Month  
Electrical Safety Month  
17-23 Safe Boating Week  
18-24 National EMS Week  
19-26 Buckle Up America Week

##### June:

NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH

##### July:

Eye Injury Prevention Month

##### August:

Prepare Your Winter Safety Training!

##### September:

5-12 National Safety Council Congress & Expo – Chicago, IL

21-27 Farm Safety/Health Week

##### October:

5-11 Nat. Fire Prevention Week  
20-24 School Bus Safety Week  
20-24 Radon Action Week

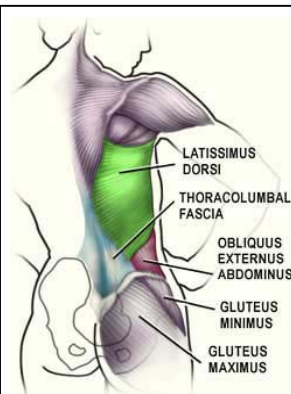
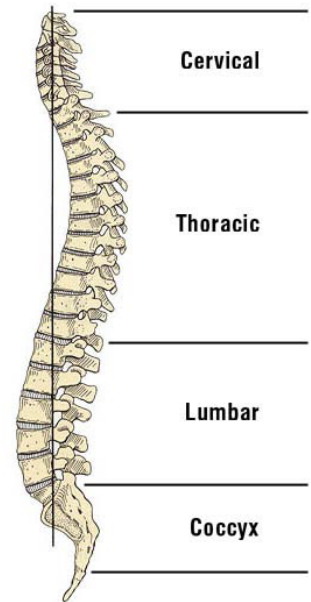
##### November:

Take advantage of the weather and do your classroom training!

##### December:

"3D Month" - Nation Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

- **Exercise !!** Numerous studies have shown that a doctor approved exercise regimen can increase the strength and flexibility of the back – vertebrae, muscles, ligaments & tendons. Cardiovascular and stretching training have been shown to be the best. Research on strength training and back pain conducted at the University of Florida has shown that strong low-back muscles are less prone to injury. A study (Risch 1993) found that low-back patients had significantly less back pain after 10 weeks of specific (full-range) strength exercise for the lumbar (lower) spine muscles.
- **Get some sleep !!** – When you don't get a sufficient amount of rest, your body becomes weak. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of injury. A full nights rest (8 hours of sleep) is needed to make the body function correctly and at full potential.
- **Know your limitations !!** Everyone has limitations and everyone's limitations are different. If there is any doubt that you can't lift or move the object that you're about to move – **GET HELP!** It's better to get help than to find out that you should have.
- **Use proper lifting skills** – use your legs to lift objects, no matter what the size - bend at the knees, not the waist, when picking up even the smallest objects. It is possible to injure the back by simply bending over to tie your shoe.
- **Use proper carrying/moving skills** – Try to avoid twisting at the waist, especially when carrying a load. Twisting can over-exert muscles and tendons and cause them to become wrenched and injured. Move your entire body in the direction you would like to go then, go that way, looking straight ahead.
- **Reduce the size of objects being lifted or moved** – Instead of ordering 50 lb bags of salt – order 10 or 25 lb bags. Order 1, 5 or 10 gallon buckets instead of 55 gallon drums. Move 2 or 3 reams of paper at a time, instead of the entire box.
- **Raise or lower the work !** – When appropriate, attempt to raise or lower the work to the correct height for the employees. This helps prevent the employee from bending over or reaching up to work. Employees will work most comfortably and efficiently when the work product remains in the area between their waist & shoulders.



**Talk To Your Doctor** - There are many muscles, tendons and ligaments along the spinal column and in the mid and lower back (See left). These muscles help to provide motion, strength and support to the entire upper body. When these muscles, tendons & ligaments become injured, weakened or unused, it can be extremely painful to move any part of the body. That's going to make it difficult, if not impossible, to run, walk, sit or lay down.

#### Back injuries are likely to be life-long, painful, debilitating injuries.

If you happen to be "...a few pounds over weight...", lose some weight to give your back a rest. You'll be amazed at the difference a few less pounds will make! Speak with your physician and ask about a back strengthening exercise program. He/she will certainly be able to suggest a program that will strengthen your back, increase your flexibility and probably help you lose a little weight! (By Jody Warner, Cambridge Risk Control Supervisor)



*OSHA and it's Ergo Guidelines for Nursing Homes* (By Denis DuMontier, Cambridge Risk Control Consultant)

OSHA has released their "Guidelines for Nursing Homes," which is intended to protect workers from musculoskeletal disorders (MSD's) and repetitive motion type injuries. This is an advisory document that was produced to address the lack of **any** guidelines regarding an ergonomics standard.

The guidelines address the problem with nursing care institutions throughout the United States. The healthcare industry workers sustain 4.5 time more injuries than any other type of worker.<sup>1</sup> Nurse's aides, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and health aides rank among the top professions at greatest risk for back injury. In 2001, nursing aides and orderlies ranked second, after truck drivers, in the number of injuries and illnesses involving time away from work.<sup>2</sup> The real issue is the pain and suffering of these employee's and the costs to the employer.

The OSHA guidelines, with a subtitle, *Ergonomics for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders* has provided the interested reader with some basic criteria and recommendations for nursing home employers to help reduce musculoskeletal disorders.

The document essentially informs the reader on the process to implement a program that will reduce injuries by minimizing and eliminating (when feasible) the manual lifting of residents. This is the important goal. OSHA has also recommended that employers initiate an ergonomics process that:

- provides management support;
- involves employees;
- identifies problems;
- implements solutions;
- addresses reports of injuries;
- provides training; and
- evaluates ergonomics efforts.

**"...healthcare industry workers sustain 4.5 time more injuries than any other type of worker..."**

One important dimension of these guidelines are case histories that are highlighted for the reader, which have been inserted at the beginning and the end of the document. This information provides a valid testimony that an ergonomics program will be beneficial when properly put into practice.

The one section of the guidelines that is really important to understand is how to identify problems and provide solutions for resident lifting. Basically, it offers criteria to assess each and every resident regarding the following:

- size and weight;
- assistance and care needed;
- if the resident will cooperate and understands assistance needed;
- any medical conditions that may influence the choice of methods for lifting or repositioning.

The above-mentioned criteria is vitally important and is most necessary in determining appropriate methods for lifting and repositioning a resident.

The guidelines also provide good references for establishing protocols that emphasize systematically examining resident's needs. This includes flow charts, which are recommended solutions for expected situations that occur daily at healthcare institutions. These flow charts have simple decision making levels; Yes, No, and, "If this- then do this." Protocols are also provided concerning the use of mechanical lifting and resident moving equipment that can be utilized to move and transfer patients safely for all parties. In fact the major part of the document is devoted to practical solutions, which includes graphical and narrative procedures.

Training is another important section of the guidelines that have been written, but may lack specific criteria that addresses actually lifting and transferring a resident in a step-by-step procedure.

To obtain a copy of the Nursing Home Ergo document, go to: <http://www.osha.gov/pls/publications/pubindex.list>.

(References: 1. 2. Nash, James L., The Business Case for OSHA's Nursing Home Ergonomics Guidelines, 35-38, Occupational Hazards, 65/6, June 2003.)

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# Safety Resource Center

## *It's Good To Know:*

Ask Your Cambridge Risk Control Representative For One of the -  
**"New & Improved Safety Handouts" !**

"Back Safety – 7 Ways To Take A Load Off"

"Back Safety – Health Back & Neck"

"Back Safety – Safe Lifting"

"Ladder Safety – Proper Usage Is The Key"

"Soft Tissue Issues – Strain & Sprain Prevention"

## *Helpful Websites:*

**National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health**  
[www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh)

**The National Safety Council**  
[www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)

**Occupational Health & Safety Administration (OSHA)**  
[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)



## *Construction Safety & OSHA Training:*

Now that it's winter, construction work will probably slow. It's a great time to train your workers for OSHA compliance issues:

- **Managers & Supervisors**
- **OSHA 10 & 30 Hour Classes**  
General Industry Construction
- **OSHA Compliance Classes**

Your people can train in our facility, or in yours!

**Call for class availability:  
312-381-8208**