

Back Injury Prevention

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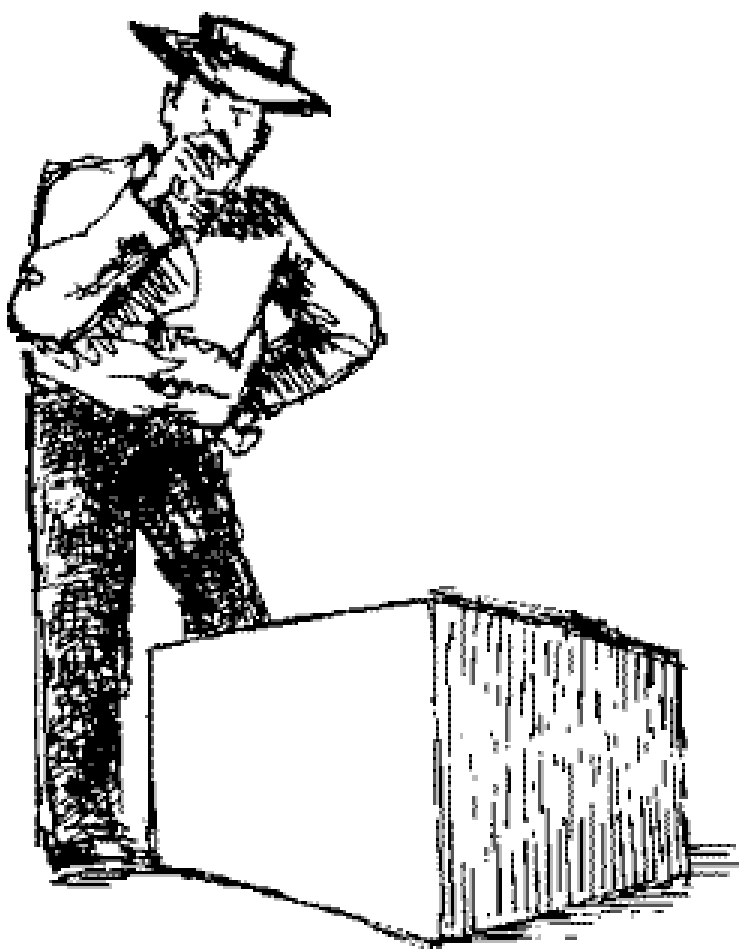


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RESOURCES

The Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) also offers several free Agriculture safety publications online at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html>.

DWC features a free occupational safety and health audiovisual library. For more information, call 512-804-4620 or visit the TDI website at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html>.

Division of Workers' Compensation

Resource Center • 512-804-4620 • resourcecenter@tdi.texas.gov

Safety Violations Hotline • 1-800-452-9595 • safetyhotline@tdi.texas.gov

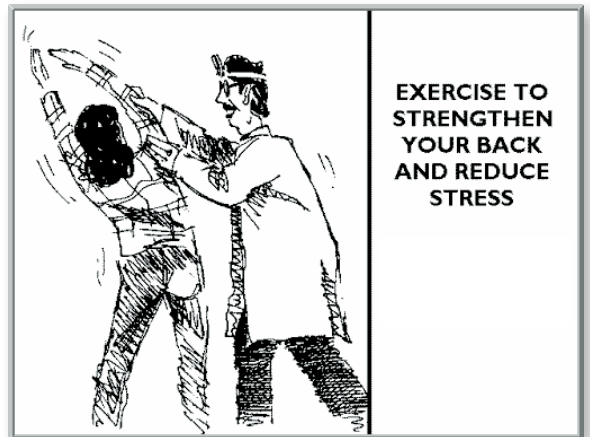
LEARN TO PREVENT BACK INJURY

Preventing a back injury is much easier than repairing one. Since your back is critically important to your ability to perform all daily activities including your job. Most pain arises from using your back improperly, so learning a few basic rules about lifting, posture and proper exercise can help keep your back in good shape.



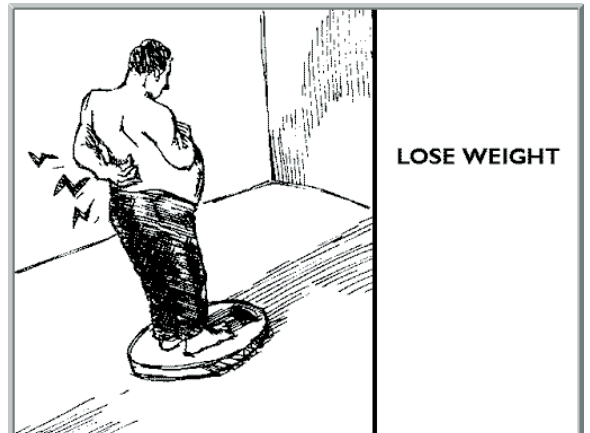
EXERCISE TO STRENGTHEN YOUR BACK AND REDUCE STRESS

Having strong back and stomach muscles is important in order to support the work your back is put through each day. By doing simple back-toning exercises, you not only strengthen your back, but can also reduce stress and improving your posture. Check with your doctor as to the best exercises for you.



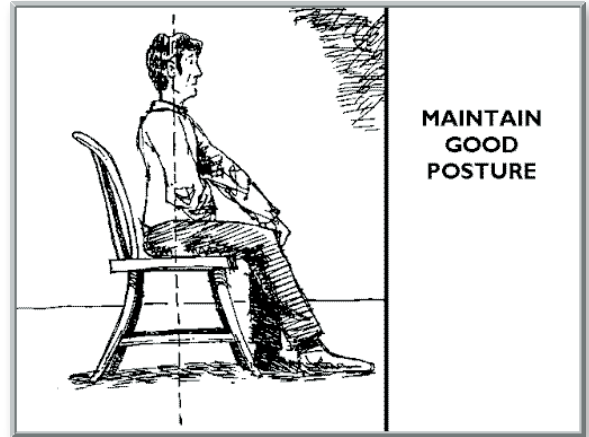
LOSE EXCESS WEIGHT

Excess weight puts extra force on back and stomach muscles. Your back tries to support the weight in front by swaying backwards, causing excess strain on the lower back muscles. By losing weight, you can reduce strain and pain in your back. Check with your doctor for the most sensible diet plan for you.



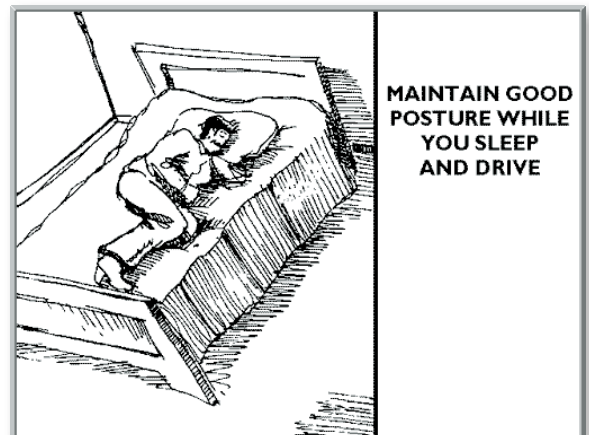
MAINTAIN GOOD POSTURE

You can prevent many back pains by learning to sit, stand and lift items correctly. When you sit down, don't slouch. Slouching makes the back ligaments, not the muscles, stretch and hurt, thus putting pressure on the vertebrae. Learn to stand tall with your head up and shoulders back.



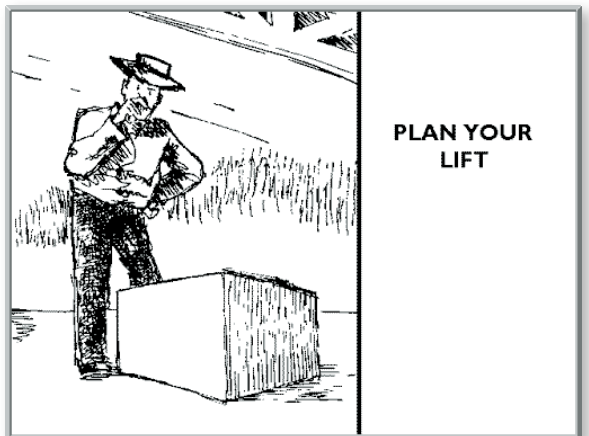
MAINTAIN GOOD POSTURE WHILE YOU SLEEP AND DRIVE

Sleep on a firm mattress or place plywood between your box spring and mattress for good back support. If your mattress is too soft it could result in a back sprain or sway back. Sleep on your side with your knees bent or on your back with a pillow under your knees for support. Drive with your back straight against the seat and close enough to the wheel so your knees are bent and are slightly higher than your hips.



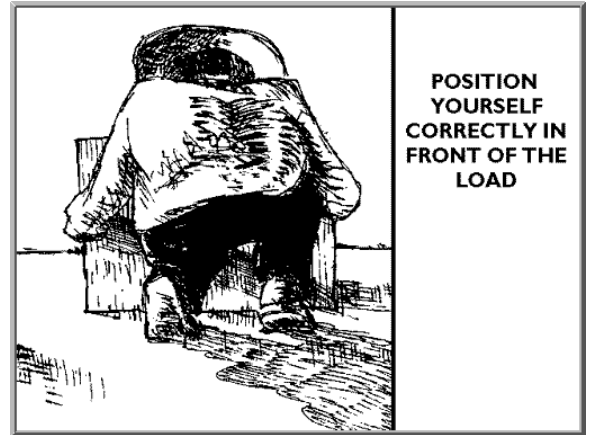
PLAN YOUR LIFT

Lifting objects is often a mindless task, and unfortunately many people perform lifts incorrectly, resulting in unnecessary strain on their back and surrounding muscles. In order to lift correctly and reduce strain on your back, it's important to plan your lift in advance. This means to think about the weight of the object you will be moving and the distance you will be moving it. Is it bulky? Will you need help? Do you see any hazards that can be eliminated? Think about this whenever you do any lifting.



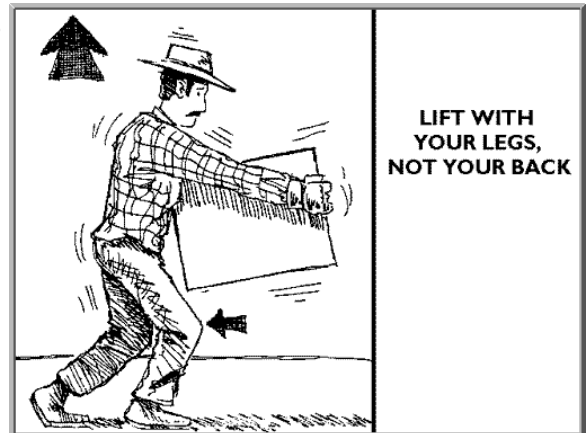
POSITION YOURSELF CORRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE LOAD

Once you have planned your lift, the next important step is to align yourself correctly in front of the load with your feet straddling the load, one foot slightly in front of the other for balance. Slowly squat down by bending your knees, not your back and stomach. Using both hands, firmly grab the load and bring it as close to your body as you can. This will help distribute the weight of the load over your feet and make the move easier.



LIFT WITH YOUR LEGS, NOT YOUR BACK

Once the load is close to your body, slowly straighten out your legs until you are standing upright. Make sure the load isn't blocking your vision as you begin to walk slowly to your destination. If you need to turn to the side, turn by moving your feet around and not by twisting at your waist.



GET HELP, IF NEEDED

If the load is too heavy, bulky, or awkward for you to lift alone, find a friend to help you carry it. If no one is available, is it possible to break the load into two smaller loads? Or, can you locate a cart or dolly to help you move it? Look for simple solutions to help make the move easier on you and your back.



SET THE LOAD DOWN CORRECTLY

Once you have reached your destination, it's equally important that the load is set down correctly. By reversing the above lifting procedures you can reduce the strain on your back and stomach muscles. If you set your load on the ground, squat down by bending your knees and position the load out in front of you. If the load is set down at table height, set the load down slowly and maintain your contact with it until you are sure the load is secure and will not fall when you leave.

