

Back Care

Anatomy Your entire body is supported by your spinal column. The spinal Column is made up of 30 separate bones called vertebrae, all linked and supported by a series of tiny muscles. Small pads called discs are situated between each vertebrae and act like shock absorbers to cushion pressure. The spinal column is wrapped by a system of nerves. The spinal system has three natural curves:

Cervical - From the base of the neck to the brain

Thoracic - Situated from the middle to the lower back

Lumbar - Located from the lower back to the buttocks area.

These three curves need to be kept in natural alignment in order to prevent discomfort.

Preventive Measures Most occupational physicians agree on several "universal" preventive measures employees should follow to help lower the risk of back injuries:

1. Maintain a good diet to avoid becoming overweight.
2. Develop good posture walking and sitting.
3. Be conscious of how you twist and bend. Twisting and bending the wrong way can exert too much pressure on one side of your vertebrae.
4. Always use **proper lifting techniques**. (see below)
5. Develop a consistent exercise routine
6. Eliminate or reduce your use of tobacco. Tobacco smoking reduces the supply of oxygen and nutrients to the discs that cushion the vertebrae.

The following are guidelines for conducting a proper lift of an object on the ground. To lift objects not on the ground, the same principles apply. Before lifting, examine the load for grease, sharp edges or other hazards. Plan your path and make sure that there are no obstructions or tripping hazards. Consider how you will set your load. Your spinal column is a very sensitive mechanism. Over time, improper lifting can cause damage that can lead to injury.

Proper Lifting Procedures

1. Position your feet at shoulder width to provide the necessary balance for a smooth lift.
2. Tighten your stomach muscles by pulling in your stomach. Keep your back straight to keep the spine, back muscles and ligaments in correct alignment.
3. Bend at the hips and knees by using the sit down position. Draw the object close to the body.
4. Grasp the object by opposite corners and position the body so the weight is centered over your feet.
5. Start the lift with a thrust of your feet, **lifting with your leg muscles**. Use smooth movements.
6. Once you lift the load, keep it close to the body. Avoid twisting motions.
7. **Squat down** slowly and place the load down gently.

**NEVER LIFT ANYTHING YOU ARE NOT SURE YOU CAN PHYSICALLY MANAGE!
SEE THE PRODUCTION MANAGER FIRST!**

Received from Manager ____/____/____ I have read this document and do not have any questions concerning it:

Employee signature