

>> TOOLBOX TALK – Preventing Back Injuries

The back is one of the strongest anatomical structures of the body, however, heavy lifting, repetitive movements, and/or sitting all day can weaken the back.

Pain can occur anywhere along your spine from the neck down. The pain can arise from many structures in your back. Structures making up the back include the bones (vertebrae), the joints between the vertebrae, the discs that serve as cushions, the ligaments, the muscles, and the nerves.

Back Pain

A number of factors can contribute to back pain at work:

- Force – Exerting too much force on your back by lifting and moving heavy objects can cause injury.
- Repetition – Repeating movements, especially those that involve twisting or rotating your spine, can cause injury.
- Inactivity – An inactive job or desk job can cause back pain, especially if you have poor posture or sit in a chair with inadequate back support.
- Other factors that contribute to back pain could include aging, poor physical condition or obesity.

Reporting

- If you have injured your back and need treatment, report the injury to your immediate supervisor and seek medical attention.
- Report your injury to Workplace NL by completing the worker's report of injury (form 6) and the employer's report of injury (form 7).

Preventing Back Injuries

The following tips may prevent back injuries:

- Think Twice Lift Once – Bend at your knees and lift with your legs. Keep feet shoulder width apart with one foot slightly behind the other. Tighten your stomach and buttocks muscles. Hold object close to your body and do not twist when lifting. Make sure your route is clear.
- Use mechanical lifting aids where possible.
- Employ a team lift for objects that are too large, heavy or awkward for one person to safely lift.
- Combine aerobic exercise, such as swimming or walking, with exercises that strengthen and stretch your back muscles and abdomen. Exercises that increase your balance and strength can also decrease your risk of falling and injuring your back.
- Eat a healthy diet – Make sure you get enough calcium and vitamin D. These nutrients help prevent osteoporosis.
- Pay attention to posture when standing or sitting. If you sit for a prolonged period, change your position, or periodically get up and walk around or stretch.

Complete and attach Toolbox Meeting Form and process as per company policy.

Content adapted for NLCSA, with permission, from toolbox talk by the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association.



TOOLBOX MEETING FORM

Date: _____ Project: _____

Supervisor: _____ No. in Crew: _____ No. Attending: _____

Review Last Meeting:

	Names of Attendees (Signature Required)
Topics Discussed (policies, practices, procedures, hazard assessment):	
Suggestions Offered:	
Action(s) to be Taken:	
Injuries/Accidents Reviewed:	

Supervisor's Remarks: _____

Signature: _____