

☰ Tool Box Talk | Sprain and Strain Hazards On the Job

To help prevent sprains and strains on the job, focusing on sources of ergonomic risk can explore different ways to make lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling safer.

Example: When a task involves pushing and/or pulling: A change to the workspace or the task itself can enhance worker safety by asking:

- * Can you shorten the distance that objects are pushed or pulled?
- * Can you clear the path so workers don't need to push or pull over obstacles, up ramps or make frequent turns?
- * Does the floor have a hard surface with good traction?
- * If you're sliding an object, can you slide it over slicker surfaces?



The following questions open possibilities of what workers can do to reduce the impact of risk factors

PROCESS

- Do we need to lift this object?
- Is there an unnecessary step in the process that requires lifting?
- Can you avoid lifting the same object more than once?
- Can the supplier deliver materials in quantities or packages that you don't need to lift?

OBJECT

- Can you make the object lighter?
- Can you use smaller containers that can be lifted closer to the body?
- Can you add handles to the object or container to provide a better grip?
- Can you pack items in containers so that they don't shift when lifted?

WORKSPACE

- Can you remove obstacles to get closer to the object?
- Can heavy and frequently used items be stored between knee and shoulder height?
- Can items be stored at the same height that they'll be used?
- Can you arrange the work area so objects can be lifted directly in front of the body with two hands?
- Can you create enough space between the start and end of the lift so workers can move their feet to turn rather than twisting?

TOOLS

- Can you use something like a forklift or conveyor to move objects?
- Can you use an overhead lifting device with a special attachment?
- Can you use a floor-based lift?
- Can you use lifting straps for two person lifts?

HUMAN

- Can you team lift large or awkward items so that workers each lift from one end?
- Can employees wear protective clothing so that they can get closer to objects that are dirty, hot, cold, or sharp?
- Are employees trained on safely using manual material handling equipment?

MOVEMENT

- Can you use gravity to help move objects?
- Can you use a lever arm to help lift objects?
- Can you change a lifting motion to a sliding one?
- Can you use a lever arm to help lift objects?

TIME

- Can you rotate workers to jobs that don't require lifting?
- Can you break up lifting tasks so that they're spread out over a shift with some recovery time in between?





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