



Preventing Sprains and Strains in Construction

Sprains and strains are among the top ten most common injuries in construction. Considering the inherent risks in our profession, it is crucial that we stay focused on safety and make injury prevention a daily priority.

THE POWER OF PLANNING

In the dynamic world of construction, controlling exposure to sprains and strains can be challenging. However, planning is a powerful tool that can significantly reduce these risks. Whether you are moving materials, handling sheet goods, or working from scaffolding, planning your actions beforehand can make all the difference.

TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION

For tasks involving manual material handling, especially those requiring two or more workers, teamwork and communication are key. Prioritize working together as a team and understanding you and your partner's actions and intentions. Take the time to discuss how you will lift, carry, and secure the materials, especially when working with a new partner. One wrong move with heavy materials can lead to serious injuries, so let us avoid that by fostering effective teamwork.

SCAFFOLDING SAFETY

When working from scaffolding, make sure to plan your moves carefully. Consider how you will get the material in place and whether you will need mechanical assistance like a forklift or a boom truck. Can you position the materials strategically to minimize the need for excessive lifting and carrying? Take all these factors into account before starting a task.

PROPER MATERIAL HANDLING TECHNIQUES

When loading or unloading materials, avoid bending, twisting, or carrying items over long distances. Refrain from placing materials too low or too high, as it can strain your back. Remember never to twist while holding

a load; this is one of the most harmful actions for your back. Give yourself enough space to avoid twisting, especially when offloading materials from a truck.

SHOVELING TECHNIQUES

For tasks involving shoveling, try alternating your hand positions (left hand and right hand forward). Although it might feel unusual initially, this technique allows both sides of your body to share the workload, reducing strain on specific muscles. Always remember that proper muscle usage and posture play a crucial role in maintaining a healthy spine, which, in turn, affects the wear and tear on your spinal disks, muscles, and ligaments.

DEALING WITH REPETITIVE MOTION

Tasks involving repetitive hand or wrist movements require special attention. For example, consistent use of a screwdriver can lead to constant wrist twisting. Consider using battery-operated screw guns to minimize this risk. Similarly, long hours of nail driving can cause pain in your elbows and wrists. Opt for tools with wooden handles, as they transmit less vibration than steel or fiberglass handles. You may also consider using tennis elbow supports or vibration-dampening gloves when working with vibrating tools.

SEEKING HELP

There is no shame in asking for help when manual lifting is required. If a load seems too heavy or difficult to handle, never hesitate to get assistance from a fellow worker or use appropriate lifting aids.

By working smart and safely, we can significantly reduce the risk of sprains and strains in our workplace. Remember, injury prevention is a collective effort, and together, we can create a safer and more productive work environment for everyone.

Sprains and Strains in the Construction Industry. www.toolboxtopics.com/Sprains_and_Strains_in_the_Construction_Industry.htm.

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