



GOALS

This safety session should teach employees to:

- Realize how common lower back pain really is.
- Know some things they can do to minimize their risk of back injuries.

Applicable Regulations: None



1. How high is your risk? Ask yourself:

- Does my job require frequent bending and lifting?
- Do I have home duties, like caring for an ill family member or moving heavy furniture, that can strain my back?
- Am I overweight?
- Do I exercise infrequently?
- Do I smoke?
 - “Yes” answers to these questions mean you may be at an above-average risk for back problems.
- Back injuries are among the most common of all injuries. They range from minor muscle strains to serious and permanent damage. Unfortunately, a serious back injury can mean a lifetime of back pain.

2. Most of you have heard all this before—you probably know the proper way to lift—but do you follow the rules?

- Estimate whether it is really safe to lift an object by yourself.
 - Can you use a dolly or handcart to avoid manually lifting the object?
 - Can someone else assist you?
- Plan the lift and get set with feet about shoulder-width apart to give yourself a good base of support.
 - Get close to the object to be lifted.
 - Bend your legs—don’t bend over at the waist—tighten your stomach muscles, and use your leg muscles to help you lift.

3. Follow through with the lift properly.

- Don’t twist your body—instead, turn your feet in the direction you want to go.
- To place an object on a higher level, move close to the destination, climb on a step stool if necessary—put the object in place while extending your arms as little as possible.
- If you are moving something from a higher level, use a step stool so the object is not above your shoulder height when you make the actual lift. Dismount carefully and complete the move.

4. You can reduce your risk factors for back injury.

- Speak to your doctor about starting an exercise or diet program to improve your overall health and fitness level.
- Start any program slowly, and gradually increase the length and intensity of your workouts.



- If you experience pain, heed the warning and stop. If the pain is severe or persists, seek professional advice. If it is mild and goes away quickly, you might simply wait a few days and then try a less strenuous program.
- Take action now and quit smoking. Your doctor can offer advice about this as well, and there are many groups in the community ready to assist you.

5. Analyze your work and home activities to minimize your risk.

- Use dollies or other available lifting devices.
- Try to keep all lifting between knuckle height when standing and shoulder height.
- Whenever possible, begin your lift with the object in that height range and move to a destination at a similar height.
- Lifts that begin or end either at floor height or with an object above your shoulders are the most likely to cause injury or back stress.



DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Are there things that you, *personally*, feel you should do to minimize your risk of back injury and pain?
- Are there changes that can be made, *here in the workplace*, to reduce the need for manual lifting of heavy objects?



CONCLUSION:

Knowing the rules about safe lifting is the first step. The most important second step, however, is applying this knowledge to your everyday activities.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

Have your employees take the Avoid Back Pain by Safe Lifting quiz. By testing their knowledge, you can assess their ability to obey the rules for safe lifting and determine whether they need to review this important topic again soon.



AVOID BACK PAIN BY SAFE LIFTING QUIZ

1. **Being overweight, exercising infrequently, and smoking are all factors that put you at greater risk of back injury.**
a. True b. False
2. **When lifting, you should not:**
a. Bend your knees.
b. Bend over at your waist.
c. Tighten your stomach muscles.
3. **When moving an object, it is safer if it stays on a level between your knuckle height and shoulder height.**
a. True b. False
4. **If you experience pain when exercising, you should work through it until it goes away.**
a. True b. False
5. **Frequent bending and lifting make you less likely to suffer a back injury.**
a. True b. False
6. **You should use a step stool to reach high objects rather than reach above your shoulders.**
a. True b. False
7. **You can reduce the risk in moving heavy loads by:**
a. Using a dolly or handcart
b. Finding someone to assist you in lifting the load
c. Dividing the load into more than one part
d. All of the above
8. **Don't twist your body—move your feet to change direction during a lift.**
a. True b. False
9. **If you know you need exercise, just start right in.**
a. True b. False
10. **Lifting, both at work and at home, can contribute to back injuries.**
a. True b. False

When you have completed this quiz, turn it in to your supervisor.

Name: _____

Date: _____



Safety Trainer **Avoid Back Pain by Safe Lifting**

ANSWERS TO AVOID BACK PAIN BY SAFE LIFTING QUIZ

1. a. True.
2. b. Don't bend over at the waist.
3. a. True.
4. b. False. Pain is a warning—stop right away. If the pain is severe or persists, seek professional help. If it is mild and goes away quickly, wait a few days and try a less strenuous exercise program.
5. b. False. Frequent bending and lifting can increase your risk for a back injury.
6. a. True.
7. d. All of the above.
8. a. True.
9. b. False. It is always safer if you ask your doctor's advice before beginning an exercise program.
10. a. True. Both work and home activities contribute to how often you are performing lifts.