

## COULD YOU HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

About 25% of adult Americans have hypertension. A third don't know it. Be watchful of your blood pressure if you are:

**Over 55.** Blood pressure increases with age.

**Overweight.** People over their ideal weight are 2-6 times more likely to develop hypertension.

**Physically inactive.** People who are physically active have a 20%-50% lower risk of developing hypertension than those who are not active.

**Eating excess salt.** Sodium may elevate blood pressure if you are sensitive to it.

**African-American.** Blacks are especially prone to hypertension.

**Diabetic.** People with diabetes are 5 times more likely to suffer stroke, a major risk of hypertension.

**A smoker.** Smoking constricts blood vessels, increasing heart disease risk.

**A heavy drinker.** More than 1-2 drinks a day can raise your blood pressure.

The causes of hypertension are not fully understood, but there's no mistaking the problems it can cause. Untreated, it can lead to heart attack, heart damage, stroke and kidney disease.

Regardless of age, know your blood pressure - the actual numbers. Have it checked once a year. By age 45 or 50 it's time to monitor your blood pressure and keep it under control.

We welcome your comments and suggestions about the Connection. To submit articles and/or topic ideas, please call: (269) 629-9708 or send to P.O. Box 460, Richland, MI 49083. Also visit our website at: [www.CLS-Skilledlabor.com](http://www.CLS-Skilledlabor.com)

## Knowing Your Job Means Knowing Safety

One of the most important things you can do to ensure your own safety is to know what you're doing. Job skills, the special know-how that many of you take for granted but that is absolutely essential for your safety and the safety of others.

You know the right way to use equipment and how to operate a piece of machinery safely. And you wouldn't think of using equipment you weren't trained to use. No matter how smart you are and how safety conscious, you can't be completely safe doing a task that you don't have the skills for.

Yet accidents often happen because people don't know what they're doing. No matter how careful you are, if you overload a crane because you don't know what its load limit is, you're headed for a worksite disaster. And if you use dangerous material, such as flammable liquids, without knowing their properties, you could put the whole crew in danger.

Knowing your job means knowing what you can and can't do with the equipment and materials you use. It means knowing when to wear protective equipment and exactly what protection is right for the operation you're doing. You wouldn't think of using ordinary safety goggles for welding, any more than you would use welding goggles when grinding or sawing.

The first rule of safety, then, is "know your job." When you know your job, you also know that no matter how skilled you are, you still need to guard against the dangers that are part of it. You won't be tempted to cut corners on safety.

The second rule of safety is "when you don't know, ask." None of us are so skilled that we know everything there is to know. And new skills and techniques come along all the time. Or you may have done an operation hundreds of times and realized that you've forgotten some detail that you need to know to be safe. Refresh your

memory by rereading safety procedures from time to time. And if you can't find what you need to know, ask your supervisor, especially when it comes to safety. Remember, you're not highly skilled until you're highly safe.



## Carry it Safely

Did you know that many accidents are caused by moving objects the wrong way? It's true, so review the following rules for carrying objects safely. Don't become a statistic yourself.

**Wear protective gear.** Gloves, safety shoes, and leather apron if materials will be held against you.

**Before you lift the material, check it for splinters, protruding nails, or other hazards that might injure your hands.**

**Get help if the object is too big or heavy for you.**

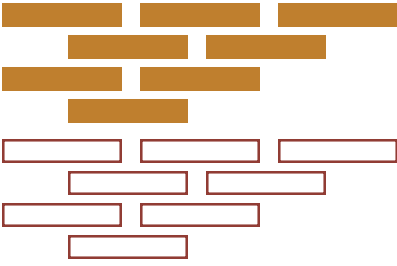
**Keep the load close to your body.**

**Be sure you have a firm footing, especially when you are on a ramp, platform, or loading dock.**

**Be sure you can see where you're going. Make sure your path is clear of slipping and tripping.**

**Don't change your grip on the load unless its weight is supported.**

**Don't twist your body at the waist. If you have to change direction, move your feet. If you can't move your feet without losing balance, the load is too big for one person.**



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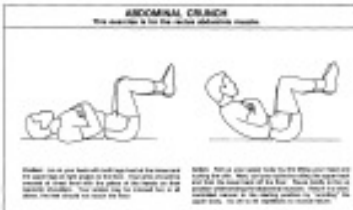
# CONNECTION

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## THE CRUNCH

Everyone needs well-toned abdominal muscles and the best exercise for strengthening abdominal muscles is the “crunch”, also known as the abdominal curl.

1. Lie on the floor with knees bent, feet flat.
2. Press your lower back into the floor causing your upper body to lift slowly
3. Come up to no more than a 30 degree angle.
4. Keep your arms straight to your side.
5. Slowly lower your back to the ground.
6. Keep lower back pressed to the ground.
7. Start with 3 to 5 sets and a brief rest. Gradually increase.
8. Stop if you feel discomfort in the lower back.



## Lift with Your Head, Not with Your Back

The majority of back-related injuries are caused by improper lifting techniques. Whether you lift heavy items on a regular basis or vary rarely, here are some tips on how to save your back:

Size up the load and determine if you can lift it alone, or if you should ask for help.

Stand close to the load with your feet wide apart.

Bend at the hips and knees, not your waist. This helps keep your center of balance and enables your strong leg muscles to do the lifting.

Keep the curve of your back in its natural position. As you grip the load, arch your lower back inward by pulling your shoulders back and sticking your chest out.

Hug the load. The closer the load is to your body, the less pressure it will put on your back.

Avoid twisting your spine. Keep your feet, knees, and torso in line while you lift.

Don't hold your breath while lifting, and avoid locking your joints in a straightened position.

Move heavy items slowly and steadily, without jerking.

Use a back support for the lower back and abdominal regions of the body if you lift heavy items often.

Squat down when you set the load down. Bend at the hips and knees, and arch your lower back in.