CONSTRUCTION LABOR SERVICES, INC

THE

# CONNECTION

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## Protect Your Hands at Work

Hand and finger injuries are relatively common in the workplace. In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that only back injuries cause more lost days of work. Of the hand and finger injuries sustained in the workplace, cuts, bruises and fractures are among the most common.

To reduce your risk of hand or finger injury on the job, follow these safety tips:

- Don't wear rings, a watch or other jewelry when you're working with machinery. Jewelry can become caught and cause serious injury.
- Always wear the appropriate hand protection for your job. One study found that 60 percent of hand and finger injuries could be prevented if workers wear the appropriate gloves or other protective gear.
- If you work with chemicals, rinsing with water or washing with a mild nonabrasive soap may be enough to remove many chemical contaminants. However, follow manufacturers' instructions regarding the chemical you're exposed to.
- Be especially careful if your work equipment is not performing as it's supposed to, if you're using a different work method or if you're performing an unusual task. These conditions significantly increase your risk of sustaining a hand or finger injury.
- Don't reach into a machine unless you're sure it's been isolated from all power sources.
- Stay focused. Don't become distracted or rushed while performing your job duties. This also increases your risk of hand or finger injury. Don't take shortcuts.

Mayo Clinic Health Information

# Everyday Aches and Pains

Do you sometimes wake up feeling stiff and sore? After age 40, muscle and joint pain may become more frequent and recovery from strenuous activity is slower. The back, hips, knees and feet are especially vulnerable to strains, injury and arthritis.

Prevention of muscle and joint problems has moved to the center stage. Experts believe everyday aches and pains are less about aging and more about body mechanics - posture, lack of fitness, mental and physical tension, and lack of adequate rest.

### What Makes Us Ache?

### Lack of Sleep

After a long day of work, whether sitting, standing or on the go, the body becomes fatigued. And so do the muscles and joints, sometimes to the point of soreness. They need restorative sleep to recover.

### Stress

When mental stress runs high, the body tenses and restricts blood flow to the muscles and nerves, especially through the upper body. Prolonged muscle tension can produce fatigue and even trigger back pain or headache.

### Posture

Sedentary activities, such as sitting at a computer or driving for long periods, can produce aches and stiffness in virtually every muscle group. Proper posture that maintains the natural curve of your spine can help reduce tension in the back, neck and shoulders.

### Injury

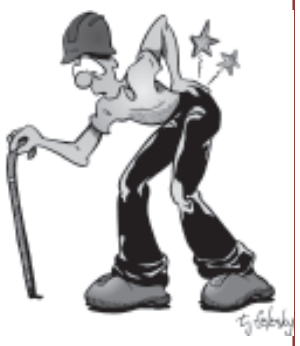
Past injuries of the joints or muscles can produce recurring pain or create a permanent weakness. Because these areas may be subject to re-injury, take steps to ensure their full recovery and protection.

### Muscles

We tend to use the same muscles day after day for work, play and exercise. Meanwhile, other muscles may get little use and lose mass. Adequate muscles helps stabilize the joints and prevents strain and injury.

### Exercise

New exercisers often try to do too much too soon. Exceeding your body's ability to adapt to the increased physical demand can result in soreness and injury. Introduce increases in physical activity gradually.



### Weight

Any excess weight you carry adds stress to your joints and increases the pain and risk of osteoarthritis. Reducing excess fat around your abdomen may reduce the strain and achiness in your lower back muscles.

# SCAFFOLDING

## HAZARD:

When scaffolds are not erected or used properly, fall hazards can occur. About 2.3 million construction workers frequently work on scaffolds. Protecting these workers from scaffold-related accidents would prevent an estimated 4,500 injuries and 50 fatalities each year.

## SOLUTIONS:

Scaffold must be sound, rigid and sufficient to carry its own weight plus four times the maximum intended load without settling or displacement. It must be erected on solid footing.

Unstable objects, such as barrels, boxes, loose bricks or concrete blocks must not be used to support scaffolds or planks.

Scaffold must not be erected, moved, dismantled or altered except under the supervision of a competent person.

Scaffold must be equipped with guardrails, midrails and toeboards.

Scaffold accessories such as braces, brackets, trusses, screw legs or ladders that are damaged or weakened from any cause must be immediately repaired or replaced.

Scaffold platforms must be tightly planked with scaffold plank grade material or equivalent.

A "competent person" must inspect the scaffolding and, at designated intervals, reinspect it.

Rigging on suspension scaffolds must be inspected by a competent person before each shift and after any occurrence that could effect structural integrity to ensure that all connections are tight and that no damage to the rigging has occurred since its last use.

Synthetic and natural rope used in suspension scaffolding must be protected from heat-producing sources.

Employees must be instructed about the hazards of using diagonal braces as fall protection.

Scaffold can be accessed by using ladders and stairwells.

Scaffolds must be at least 10 feet from electric power lines at all times.

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

## Stairways

**Hazard:**

Slips, trips and falls on stairways are a major source of injuries and fatalities among construction workers.

**Solutions:**

Stairway treads and walkways must be free of dangerous objects, debris and materials

Slippery conditions on stairways and walkways must be corrected immediately.

Make sure that treads cover the entire step and landing.

Stairways having four or more risers or rising more than 30 inches must have at least one handrail.

# HOUSEKEEPING

## WHERE TO CONCENTRATE YOUR EFFORTS

### High Traffic Areas

Keep these areas free from the accumulation of materials, finished parts and scrap. It is also important to keep materials from protruding into these areas. By permanently marking aisles and passageways, the importance of keeping these areas clear is communicated and they are more easily maintained.

### Stairs/Platforms/Ladders

By keeping stair treads clear, the potential for slips and falls is reduced. The base of the stairs should also be kept clear to prevent a fall from the stairs onto materials being stored in the landing area.

### Work Areas

Good housekeeping and organization around workstations and machines is also very important. These practices help increase efficiency, reduce crowding and clutter, and provide a safer work area.

### Storage Areas

Since these areas are designed for the accumulation of materials, organization is key. Proper layout of materials for efficient space utilization will help control the buildup of materials in these areas.