

THE

CONNECTION

MARCH 2007



BACK PAIN CHECKLIST

Most back pain is caused by muscle strain from poor posture, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, mental stress, improper lifting and lack of physical fitness.

Think about your back. Become more aware of how you are using your habits with the checklist:

1. I avoid slouching when sitting or standing.
2. While sitting or driving for long periods, I use some type of lumbar cushion to support my lower back.
3. When lifting heavy objects, I bend my knees and lift with the muscles in my legs, abdomen and shoulders, not my back.
4. When moving an object, I let my leg muscles do the work by pushing, not pulling.
5. I take efforts to reduce stress and fatigue in my life.
6. I include a regular stretching routine in my exercise program to build strength and flexibility in my spine.

The more you apply these practical safeguards, the less back strain you will experience.



WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES

Most people don't worry very much about being struck by lightning, but the fact is that lightning causes more deaths and injuries than almost any other weather phenomena, including tornadoes and hurricanes. Certain types of jobs, such as outdoor construction and heavy equipment operation, create more risk than others. Another factor is worker's proximity to items that attract lightning. Anyone working outdoors, near metal objects and fences, on construction sites using heavy equipment, or near large bodies of water, is particularly vulnerable.

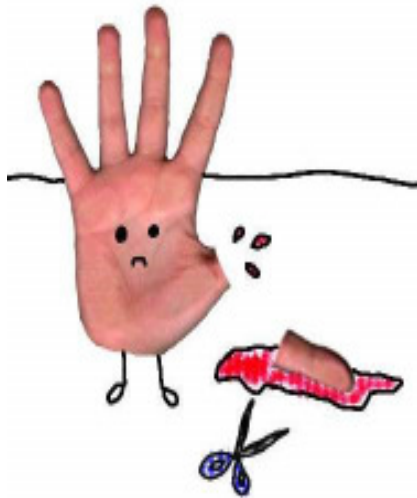
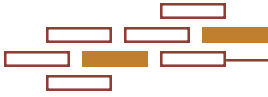
But it's not just outdoor workers who need to be concerned. People working indoors where they might be on the telephone or in contact with electrical equipment or near metal plumbing are also at risk. Be aware that lightning comes indoors through solid wires, and anything that conducts electricity can bring it directly to you. Here are some recommendations to protect yourself from lightning strikes:

Take note of the weather. Listen to weather forecasts. Be wary of dark clouds building up at a distance. Contrary to popular opinion, it doesn't even have to be raining for there to be a danger from lightning. In fact, workers may be in the greatest danger when clouds are first threatening or moving away. The majority of people are struck by lightning either at the very beginning or at the end of a storm, not at its height. It's the first bolt of lightning that often gets to people, before they're even paying attention to an approaching storm. Furthermore, lightning can arise from the sides or top of a storm as well as its center, so the danger area is larger than just the area where it's raining.

Take shelter immediately. Shelter should be sought as soon as you hear the first clap of thunder or see a flash of lightning. Go indoors or inside a vehicle with a hard top. To be safe, you must be under a roof and inside four enclosed walls—a carport or a house with open windows is still vulnerable. However an enclosed vehicle, such as a car or an airplane, is safe because it acts like a cage with the lightning moving around the outside of it while the individual is safe inside. Remain indoors or in the vehicle for five minutes after the last peal of thunder is heard.

If caught outdoors, keep a low profile. Crouch down, but don't lie down on the ground. Lightning spreads through the ground, so the less of your body in contact with it, the better. Stay away from open water, such as lakes, rivers, and the ocean, and avoid trees, especially tall, isolated ones in open areas. Don't touch metal equipment, such as construction vehicles or tools, and don't touch metallic paths, such as wire fences, pipes, rails, antennas, or anything else that could conduct electricity.

If indoors, get off the phone and stay away from plumbing. Stay off traditional telephones because lightning can be conducted through the wires. Portable phones are the safe alternative. Plumbing can also be a problem because lightning can come through metal pipes and water so avoid toilets, sinks, baths, and showers during a storm. Indoor workers using equipment that is *not* connected to electrical outlets should be safe, but equipment that's connected to electrical sources should be avoided unless your building is protected by lightning rods. These rods should be professionally installed.



PROTECTING YOUR HANDS IS IMPORTANT

Your hands are your most valuable tools and you rely on them constantly - at work and at home. That's why it's so important to learn how to protect them from accidental injury. Follow these hand safety rules at all times:

Be aware of hand hazards. Pay attention to where you place your hands. Hazards are all around you - between doors, under boxes, and in machinery.

Choose the right tool. Using the bottom of a screwdriver as a hammer, for instance, can result in a serious injury.

Watch your hands near machinery. Never bypass or modify machine or tool guards, follow lockout/tagout procedures to prevent unexpected start-ups.

Wear the right gloves for the job. Also inspect gloves for holes and other signs of wear before each use.

Practice good hygiene and follow first-aid procedures. Wash your hands after exposure to any chemicals, and before you eat, smoke or apply lotion. Always treat all hand injuries promptly - a minor injury can turn into a major one without proper treatment.

Safety Postings November 2005

PRACTICE WORK ZONE SAFETY

Define your work zone. If you're working in an area, it becomes your work zone.

Anticipate potential hazards. Changes in procedures can mean new hazards.

Remove, repair, or report any safety hazards.

Protect your safety within your work zone. Wear appropriate PPE and follow all safety rules.

Make others aware of your work zone.

Keep the safety of others in mind. Keep a protective eye on anyone who enters your work zone.

Communicate when you share a work zone. Make sure everyone is aware of hazards and appropriate protective measures.

Secure your work zone before you leave it. Follow all required housekeeping and safety procedures.



LET'S NOT SPRING INTO SPRING WITH STINGS

Bee stings can cause serious health problems.

To prevent being stung by a bee....

Stay calm. Do not karate chop the bee, as this will only make it defensive and more likely to get even with you.

Avoid wearing strong cologne or perfume and bright or flowery clothing.

If you do get stung.....

Find the stinger and remove it right away. Try to dislodge the stinger by scrapping it away rather than squeezing it, which will only release more venom.

Clean area with soap and water.



Put ice, calamine lotion, a lotion containing Benadryl, or as us old folks remember, a mixture of baking soda and water on the sting.

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

