



THE CONNECTION

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BACK PAIN

There are many unfortunate moves that can bring on back pain, but there are some other physical conditions that can magnify, complicate or increase your risk. Keeping yourself healthy can keep back attacks at bay, and it's easy to do - just put your back into it.

Out Of Shape

Poor physical condition puts you more at risk.
Flabby stomach muscles don't support your back.
Overall poor muscle condition makes lifing more dangerous.



Slouching when you walk isn't good for the "S".
Make sure to sit up straight.
Avoid leaning over (unsupported) and hunching.

Accident Fund



THE SIMPLE WHEELBARROW

Let's talk about using wheelbarrows. Now, I know what you're thinking. What is there to know about a wheelbarrow? It's got no motorized parts, no sharp edges, no high maintenance parts, and the design has probably been around for 3,000 years.

It's true that wheelbarrows are safe and very simple to use correctly. But, believe it or not, wheelbarrows have caused some serious injuries. Anytime you balance a heavy load on a single wheel, you have to pay attention to what you're doing. One time a worker lost control of a wheelbarrow as it was going down a ramp with a load of scrap. When the wheelbarrow hit the scrap box it flipped, throwing the surprised worker, who was still holding the handles, into the scrap box. He was lucky to escape with only cuts and bruises.

Because there's no top to a wheelbarrow, some workers think they can keep putting more and more in the wheelbarrow as long as it doesn't fall out.

But overloading a wheelbarrow is a sure way to lose control of it. Always put only the amount of weight in a wheelbarrow that you can physically handle on a hill or going around a corner. Making two trips is a lot faster than making one trip and having to stop and pick up the dumped load at the corner or being shorthanded because the person you dumped the load on had to go to the emergency room with broken toes.

When you raise and lower the handles of a wheelbarrow, treat them like any other heavy load you lift. Keep your back straight and bend your knees. Balance the load over the wheel for good control.

Keep your speed under control and keep a tight grip on the handles. If you lose control of the wheelbarrow, let go of the handles and shout a warning to others if necessary. Losing control is a clue that you have overloaded the wheelbarrow.

Avoid trying to move such things as planks with a wheelbarrow. Use a handtruck for these things.

Keep wheelbarrows properly lubricated for easier use. Store them out of the way of aisles and away from emergency equipment.

It doesn't take a college degree or a technical certificate to use a wheelbarrow. Just common sense and a few simple precautions.

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FALL PROTECTION TIPS

Identify all potential tripping and fall hazards before work starts.

Look for fall hazards such as unprotected floor openings/edges, shafts, skylights, stairwells, and roof openings/edges.

Inspect fall protection equipment for defects before use.

Select, wear, and use fall protection equipment appropriate for the task.

Secure and stabilize all ladders before climbing them.

Never stand on the top rung/step of a ladder.

Use handrails when you go up or down stairs.

Practice good house-keeping. Keep cords, welding leads and air hoses out of walkways or adjacent work areas.

OSHA



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

NO FIRES ALLOWED ON THIS JOB SITE

What's the first thing you would do if a fire started on the site? What's the second? Now's the time to start thinking of answers to these questions, because if it happens, there won't be time to think. And while we're at it, let's talk about preventing fires.

When it comes to fire, a construction site is a disaster waiting to happen. Fire protection systems and firewalls are not yet in place. Dust, flammable fuels, other liquids, and combustible materials are all common at construction sites. Welding operations, electrical systems, and power tools provide the sparks to start fires. There are plenty of things you can do to make your site fire safe. Let's review the important ones.

Before using a torch, get combustible materials away from the area or cover them with flame proof tarpaulins. Store acetylene and oxygen cylinders safely, away from high temperatures and separated from each other. Know your flammable liquids: heating and equipment fuels, solvents, paints and adhesives. When dispensing these materials, use approved safety cans and always ground and bond containers. Make sure you use these materials in a well ventilated area, their vapors can be explosive. If you smoke, light up in designated areas only, never where there are flammable vapors. When you're finished using flammable materials, store them immediately, away from work areas if possible.

Fine particles of dust in the air can be highly flammable. Where possible, use dust-collecting devices on power equip-

ment. Clean up dust and scraps in the wood working area regularly. Know which plastics, trim, and roofing materials are flammable and keep a respectable distance between them and spark hazards.

Know your fire extinguishers. There are four types of fires, requiring different fire extinguishers. Only Class A fires; wood, paper, cloth, and rubbish can safely be put out with water. Class B fires; grease, gases, flammable liquids and Class C fires; electrical equipment, need special extinguishers, such as carbon dioxide, dry chemical, or Halon. Class D fires; combustible metals, require special chemical agents. Know where the nearest fire extinguisher is how to use it, and what kinds of fires it's for.

Now back to the question we started out with. The first thing to do in case of fire is **SOUND THE ALARM**. Even though you may be able to put the fire out with an extinguisher, your first duty is to warn others that there is a fire in the making so that they can get out of the area. Next, **ACT WITH CAUTION - BUT FAST**. The safety of everyone, including yourself, is the highest priority. Do what you can to extinguish the fire but avoid heroics. You're responsible for preventing fires, not fighting them, unless you're thoroughly trained. With the large potential for fire on a construction site, your fire safe work practices are what really count.

