

# Back Injuries

After the common cold, back injuries are the most common reason for absenteeism in the general workforce. About 80 percent of adults are estimated to experience a back injury in their lifetime, and about 10 percent will suffer a re-injury.



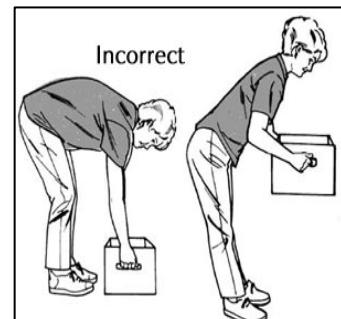
## Fact on back Injuries

- 30 to 40 % of all workers compensation costs result from back injuries.
- 26 percent of all occupational injuries are back injuries.
- 50% of all occupational-related back injuries result from manual handling of materials.
- 80 % of all workers will suffer a back injury sometime in their lives.

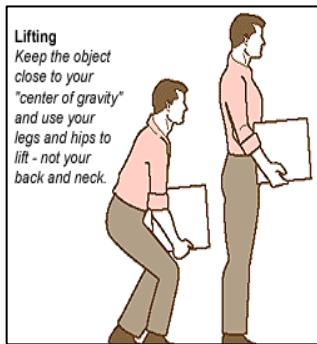
## Some causes of back claims

Few other injuries are more devastating than a back injury. Moreover, almost two-thirds of all back injury claims result from manual material handling tasks. Of those:

- 37% result from tasks that involve lifting.
- 18% result from twisting.
- 18% result from tasks that involve pushing or pulling.
- 14% result from bending.
- 8% result from carrying objects.
- 5% result from falls.



## Tips on lifting safety:



- Think before you lift (if the object is too large or heavy, get help).
- Get a firm footing. place your feet about shoulders width apart, with one foot alongside the object.
- Bend your knees not your waist.
- Bend down with your knees and put your legs on either side of the load to be lifted.
- Lift with your legs muscles, not your back muscles.
- Hugging the object keep the load close to your body, because the closer it is to your spine the less stress your back receives.
- Keep your back up right (don't add the weight of your body to the load).

### **Tips on Preventing Back Injuries**



- Identify job tasks that involve manual handling of materials.
- Eliminate manual lifting tasks whenever possible.
- Screen new hires and transferred employees to evaluate their ability to meet the physical demand of a particular job.
- Teach workers the danger of manual materials handling to avoid unnecessary stress and recognizing what objects they can handle safely.
- Try to reduce the size and weight of object to be lifted.
- Try to reduce the frequency of lifting activities.
- Redesign work stations so that lifting is eliminated or can be done safely and smoothly. For example, make tables and conveyors height-adjustable.
- Redesign tasks stations that involve pushing, pulling, carrying. For example, decrease the weight of an object so it can be carried more easily, or increase its weight so it is necessary to use mechanical assistance, such as a forklift.

Remember: you can help control workers' compensation claims and costs by ensuring that work areas are properly designed and that employees practice proper material handling techniques.