



BACK INJURY PREVENTION

Back pain is a common complaint in all industries. It can be caused simply by bending down to pick something up or as the result of an accident. No matter the cause it can be something that aggravates you from time to time or can be a debilitating injury.

Lifting heavy objects, repetitive motion and leading a sedentary lifestyle can lead to back injuries. The following tips can help you avoid back injury.

Proper Lifting

Lifting heavy or awkward objects can lead to back injury. Using various tools and equipment for extended periods of time has the same negative effect.

- Get next to the object to be lifted.
- Bend at the knees, not the back.
- Tighten your core.
- Lift with your legs, not your back.
- Keep facing forward without turning.
- Hold the object close to your body.
- Consider getting help or using a mechanical means to lift an object.
- Hold your chainsaw close to the body and rest it on the tree being cut while delimiting to reduce back fatigue.



Repetitive Motions

Repetitive motion can cause a musculoskeletal injury (MSI) not only to our hands and arms but to our back also. Operating equipment, handling lumber manually, mechanical work all poses a threat of an MSI injury.

- Avoid unnecessary twisting, bending and reaching.
- Switch back and forth between difficult and easier tasks.
- Organize your work area to eliminate excessive reaching when you are in a stationary position.
- Rotation of repetitive work tasks help reduce the risk of MSI injuries.
- Avoid awkward positions while working.





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Sedentary Work

Avoid staying in a sitting position for too long.

- Machine operators and truck drivers should get out of their seat and move every 30 minutes to promote blood flow.
- Stretch frequently to promote blood circulation.
- Adjust seats to be comfortable and have a neutral posture in your neck, arms, legs and hands.
- Seats require proper back support.
- Avoid slouching.

Posture

Having good posture is very important. Always try to keep the neutral posture position whether sitting or standing.

- Stand or sit with a straight back.
- Remove objects from back pockets that can cause unequal sitting posture.
- Seat adjustment is very important to having good posture.
- Avoid awkward bending and stretching while using a chainsaw/brush saw.



Healthy Living

Living a healthy lifestyle is becoming more popular these days. The struggle remains for those of us working in the forest industry. Bringing healthy foods to work becomes difficult in the extreme temperatures we work in. Keeping foods cold and reheating it at lunchtime can be difficult which makes unhealthy foods an easier option.

- Choose foods that are healthy even if it requires a little more effort.
- Take time to exercise and stretch to promote blood flow.
- Reduce your body weight. This lessens the chance of diabetes and heart disease.
- Rest. A good night's sleep helps the body repair itself and recover.
- Drink plenty of water. The body needs water to function properly. This also helps stimulate brain activity for memory and concentration.
- Reduce stress levels.



Stress can cause constriction in blood vessels and reduction of blood flow to the various soft tissues, including muscles, tendons, ligaments, and nerves in the back.