
Preventing Strains and Sprains

Many of our daily activities involve lifting, pushing/pulling, bending, and twisting which can raise the risk of experiencing a strain. Let's avoid this risk by working smarter and not harder. Here are some ways we can accomplish this:

- ✓ Test the weight of the item before you lift.
- ✓ The safest lift is between your knees and middle of your chest.
- ✓ Avoid storing heavy or frequently used items above shoulder level; keep these at waist level.
- ✓ Set up your workstation to minimize excessive reaching and awkward postures.
- ✓ Engineer out the lifting by using material handling aids such as a dolly or cart.
- ✓ Select comfortable footwear that provides good traction, support, and provides protection for your feet.
- ✓ Eliminate the use of rugs whenever possible - if a rug must be used, the rug should be inspected regularly for loose or curled edges; damaged rugs should be removed.
- ✓ Keep your work area free from tripping hazards. Set up the classroom and offices in a way that will eliminate or reduce the need for cords in walkways and aisles.
- ✓ Encourage students to store backpacks and personal items off the ground.
- ✓ Use a ladder or stepstool...DO NOT stand on chairs, desk, counters, or tables.
- ✓ Secure all items that are stored overhead.
- ✓ Limit the amount of time you spend doing the same motion over and over. Vary your tasks and change positions frequently throughout the day.
- ✓ Always be aware of your surroundings. Watch where you are going and avoid distractions.
- ✓ Report any unsafe conditions.
- ✓ Do not move or handle objects weighing over your job-specific limit without mechanical assistance or help from a co-worker.
- ✓ Always keep your chin up when lifting to straighten your back.
- ✓ Keep loads and your work close to your body. Carrying or lifting items away from your body increases the pressure on your lower back.
- ✓ Explore Keenan SafeSchools for related training – Workplace Injury Prevention, Injury Prevention Through Physical Conditioning, Safety Shorts: Lifting in Awkward Places

Our goal should be to maintain our health and wellness, whether at work or at home.

Let's all work smarter, not harder!
