Back Injury Awareness & Prevention

Since 1910
CSEA
New York's LEADING Union

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY
& HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Funded by a grant through the New York State Department of Labor

True or False?

BACK INJURIES ARE THE LEADING CAUSE OF LOST WORK TIME FOR CSEA MEMBERS.

True!

#1

Back Injuries:

- Are the most common body part listed on injury reports
- Account for the MOST lost work days
- Are the most expensive injuries for both the employee and the employer
- Affect CSEA members in all workplaces!

True or False?

TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO INJURY CONTROL, LIKE BACK BELTS AND BODY MECHANICS, ARE EFFECTIVE METHODS OF PREVENTING BACK INJURES.

False!

- The hazard is still present.
- Neither method eliminates or reduces the hazard.
- Several reputable studies showed **no** positive effect from the use of back belts.
- The theory of body mechanics has an inherent flaw in it…. **There is no safe lift!!!**
- Example: Lifting a patient… you can keep the load as close to your body as you can **AND** lift with your legs but you still are lifting an un-safe amount!

This Training Will Provide Answers to:

- Who's at risk?
- What causes back injuries?
- What can be done to prevent them?
- What are the next steps?

Who’s at risk?

Do you…

- ❑ lift frequently or lift heavy objects (25+lbs.)?
- ❑ push or pull heavy or light objects?
- ❑ have to bend, twist or contort yourself to perform tasks?
- ❑ sit, bend or stoop for extended periods of time?
- ❑ forcefully open or close frozen or rusted valves?
- ❑ ever get suddenly loaded or hit with an external force?
- ❑ work on uneven or slippery surfaces?

Who Else is at Risk?

- Certain jobs are very high risk; eg., health care and construction.
- The first step is identifying who is getting hurt. You can also use:
  - SH-900 / OSHA 300 (Log of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses)
  - Workers' Compensation logs
  - Accident reports
  - Surveys

CSEA Titles at Risk

Certified Nurse Aides

Youth Developmental Aides

Mental Health Therapy Aides

Developmental Aides

Material / Stock Handlers

Laborers

Plumbers

Maintenance Workers

Food Service Workers

Masons

Highway Workers

Sewer and Water Workers

Sanitation Workers

Department of Public Works Employees

Custodial Workers

Cleaners

Daycare Workers

Electricians

Stores Clerks

Plant Utility Engineers

Laundry Workers

Who else is at risk?

ON YOUR FORM, LIST WHAT OTHER JOB TITLES AT YOUR WORK SITE THAT YOU FEEL ARE AT RISK.

What is Causing the Injuries?

- There are MANY potential causes of back injuries *or* **Risk Factors**.
- For each task or job title all risk factors must be identified.
- HAZARD IDENTIFICATION is the first step to fixing the problem.

Common Risk Factors

- Heavy lifting
- Frequent lifting
- Twisting while lifting
- Bending while lifting
- Reaching while lifting
- Lifting awkward/unstable loads or people
- Lifting with forceful movements
- Forceful exertions
- Repetition
- Awkward postures
- Static postures
- Vibration
- Fatigue
- Stress
- Poor footing / slips

Things that make lifting dangerous

- **Location of your hands**: the farther your hands must be held away from your body the greater the risk.
- **How high or low the object lifted is**: the higher OR lower and object is the greater the risk.
- **How far you have to move or carry the load**: the greater the distance the greater the risk.

Things that make lifting dangerous

- **Posture**: the farther you are bent or twisted the greater the risk.
- **Frequency**: the more times you have to lift something the greater the risk.
- **Ability to grip**: the harder it is to hold on to an object increases the risk.

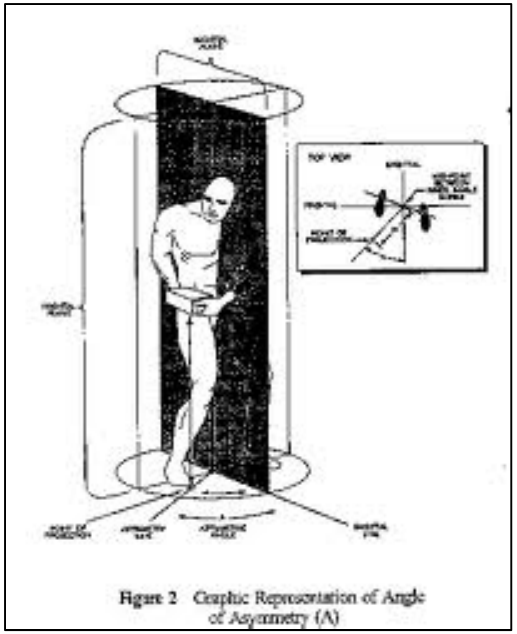


Figure 2 Graphic Representation of Angle of Asymmetry (A)

It’s not just lifting…

These principles apply to:

- Pushing and pulling objects like carts and equipment.
- Using tools, opening valves and engaging switches.
- Escorting or working with people.
- ANY task that must be performed bent over, twisted or contorted.

What are your risk factors?

- Select one of the job titles you listed on your form.
- Check each risk factor that applies to that job title in the left hand column.
- In the right hand column indicate how frequently that activity is performed.
- Expressed in…
  - Hours per day
  - Times per day / shift
  - Times per hour
  - Rarely, sometimes or frequently

What are your risk factors?

RANK THE TOP 5 RISK FACTORS BASED ON SEVERITY AND FREQUENCY

What can be done to control Risk Factors?

1. What is the proposed solution?
2. What could we do differently?

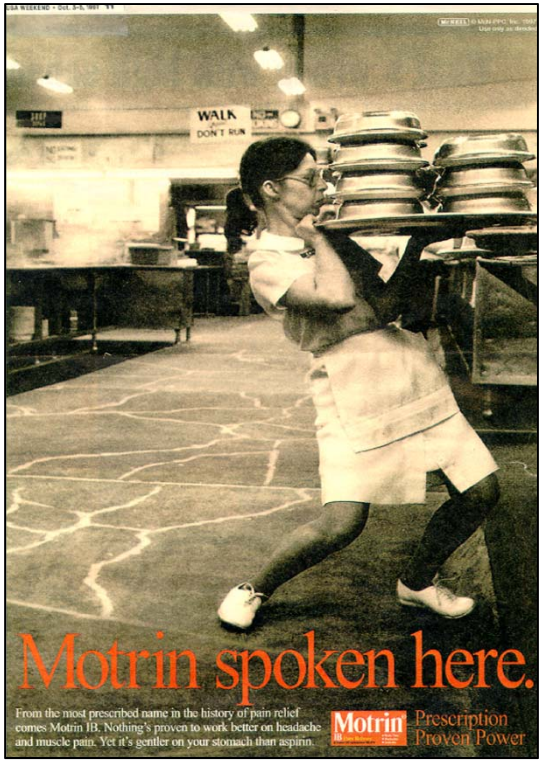
Use a cart.

Get help.

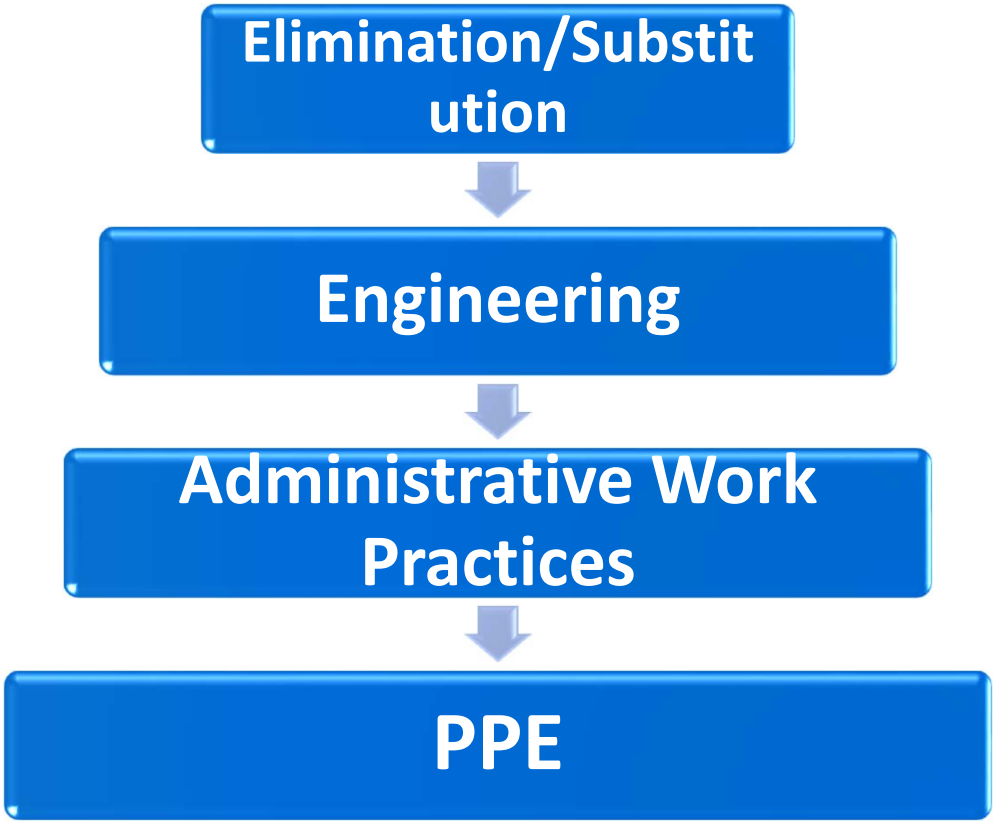
Put less on the tray.

Use lighter plates.

Many others!



Principles of Hazard Control



Common Engineering Controls

- Mechanical lifting devices
- Carts, bins and specialty carts (spring loaded / turntable)
- Hand-trucks, dollies
- Fork lifts and pallet jacks
- Skate-wheel tables and conveyors
- Proper chairs and sit-stand stools
- Redesigning / reengineering the workplace

Common Administrative Controls

Policies and procedures

- Examples: Standard operating procedures, Zero-lift programs

Purchase supplies and material in smaller volumes or containers

- Buy 35 lb bags of salt instead of 80 lb

Breaks

Training

Rearrange the workplace:

- Rearrange storage so heavy objects are at waist height
- Reduce the distance objects must be moved
- Eliminate the need to bend and reach

Material Handling

Construction / Operations /





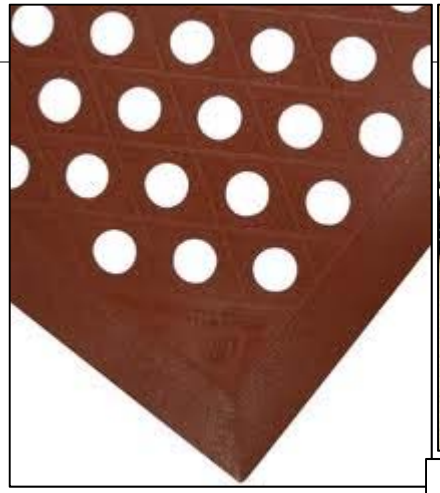






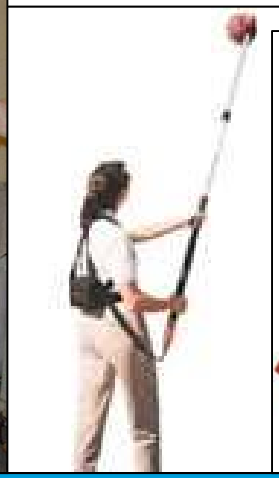

Housekeeping / Custodial / laundry











Office / Administrative

Controlling your Risk Factors

- Start by removing the risk factors!
- In the previous section, you identified and listed your top 5 risk factors.
- For each risk factor, what can be done? Use the checklist and identify which controls will address each risk factor.
- Determine what you can do now with what you have OR what must be done later through purchases and redesign.

Implementing Control Measures

LIST THE CONTROL MEASURES THAT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED NOW AND WHAT CONTROLS NEED TO BE IMPLEMENTED LATER

Next Steps

- Implement all control measures that you identified as things you can do NOW
- New equipment, facility redesign and changes to operating procedures can take time
- Determine who can help you get these changes

Next Steps

- It’s one thing to re-arrange the work place but re-designing it takes time
- Purchases MAY require a review process and approval
- Policies, procedures, SOPs often need to be negotiated AND need official approval
- You will need to build a case and make your best argument to make changes

Next Steps

- Know the extent of the problem; who and how many people are affected
- Give specific examples where someone got hurt or there was a near-miss
- Know what is causing the problem
- Select practical solutions

Be part of the solution

Next Steps

Who is the best person to talk to?

- CSEA Local or Unit President
- Labor Relation Specialist
- Occupational Safety and Health Specialist
- Immediate Supervisor
- Department Manager
- Facility Director
- Others

Who is the best person to contact about these changes?

IDENTIFY WHO YOU ARE GOING TO SPEAK WITH ABOUT BACK INJURY PREVENTION

How to make your Best Case

- Do you have all the information about the hazard?
- Do you know all the people affected?
- Do you know the extent of the problem?
- Do you know how much controls cost?
- Do you know how much it costs NOT to do anything?
- Do you know who else has the same interest as you?

Supporting information

- Occupational injury and illness logs
- Workers Compensation logs
- Incident / Accident reports
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Cost benefit analysis
- Product Information / Cost
  - What's out there and how much is it?
- Potential allies

What information is needed to make the best case argument?

IDENTIFY WHAT INFORMATION IS STILL NEEDED TO MAKE THE BEST ARGUMENT