

# SAFETYFIRST

INFORMATION DEDICATED TO DRIVER SAFETY



AHEAD OF  
THE CURVE



Safety Management  
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**Be Safe Out There**



## Strains and Sprains

Anyone can get an injury that results in a strain or sprain. These injuries are so common that they resulted in more absences from work than any other injuries, stated the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In fact, they accounted for one-third to one-half of the total injuries and illnesses in each industry.

### Know the Risks

If you have ever damaged a ligament, the tissue that connects bone to bone, you have had a sprain. You have had a strain if you injured a muscle or muscle tendon, the tissue that connects muscle to bone.

Most workplace sprains and strains affect the back, arms, and shoulders; they occur because of poor material-handling techniques. A worker may try to pull or lift a heavy or awkward object without help, for example, or may lift an object while twisting from the waist. If your muscles or ligaments have weakened over time from aging and lack of exercise, you are more apt to get a sprain or strain than if you are physically fit.

### Avoid the Risks

Sprains and strains are easy to prevent. By following some simple tips, you can reduce your risk of getting these injuries.

Handle with care. Many sprains and strains occur because workers lift things that weigh too much or because they aren't lifting correctly. Be sure you know the proper way to lift: bend the knees, not the back, carry loads close to your body and don't twist.

Say "I can't." Don't try to move or lift an object that you can't handle. Instead of lifting a 75-pound box, break it down into smaller parts. If something isn't divisible, use a mechanical device, like a hand truck or lift it with assistance from someone else.

Be sure equipment works. Devices may put sore strain on your body if they don't work properly. If the wheels on carts are not aligned, for example, you could strain your arms, shoulders, and back.

Don't unnecessarily bend or reach upward. Put as much work as you can at waist level.

Watch where you walk! If you slip or fall, you may sprain your waist or ankle. Be on the lookout for objects that clutter walkways.

Exercise. Stretch during the day to warm your muscles and increase your flexibility.

Rest the injured part of your body for a few days. Apply ice to cold packs periodically during the first three days to reduce swelling and pain. Keep the area elevated and wrap it if possible. If the area remains swollen, see a doctor.



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