



Preventing Strain Injuries

Instructor -- Chris Jenkins

Division -- Missoula

Start Date -- 2026-02-17

Expiration Date -- 2031-02-17

Job Name -- GSK

Foreman --

Attendance -- , Chris Jenkins, John Portrey

Comments:

Today we're talking about strain injuries, the sore backs, pulled muscles, and tweaked shoulders that don't always seem like a big deal at first: until they are.

These are some of the most common injuries we see in construction, and they usually don't happen during some big dramatic moment. Most of the time, they happen during everyday stuff - lifting material, carrying tools, pushing or pulling loads, or working in awkward positions for too long.

How Do These Injuries Usually Happen:

Most strain injuries come from things like:

Lifting something heavy or awkward the wrong way.

Twisting while lifting or carrying.

Reaching too far or working overhead for long periods.

Rushing instead of slowing down and thinking it through.

Trying to handle a two-person lift solo.

Staying in the same position too long without a break.

None of this is unusual, it's just part of the work we do everyday, which is exactly why we need to stay aware of it.

How Do You Reduce the Risk

You don't need to change everything you do. A few small habits go a long way.

Plan the lift

Know where the material is going before you pick it up.

Clear your path and make sure you've got solid footing.

If it's heavy, awkward, or sketchy : grab help or use equipment.

Lift smarter

Bend at the knees, not at the waist.

Keep the load close to your body.

Don't twist : turn your whole body instead.

Set materials down under control, not all at once.

Use help when you need it

Ask a coworker for help with bulky or heavy items.

Use carts, dollies, forklifts, or whatever equipment makes sense.

Don't let pride be the reason you get hurt : nobody wins that way.

Pay attention to posture

Avoid staying bent over, twisted, or overhead longer than you have to.

Adjust your work height when you can.

Stretch at the start and end of your shift and take quick movement or stretch breaks during the day.

Listen to Your Body

Pain, tightness, and fatigue are your body's warning lights.

Don't try to :push through: the pain.

Speak up early when something doesn't feel right.

Reporting discomfort early can prevent a minor issue from turning into a serious injury or lost time.

** Don't forget, **HBI requires all injuries and incidents to be reported to your supervisor immediately** and submitted to the Safety Department through an Incident Report in the LMS within two hours. **

Remember This!

Most strain injuries are preventable. Slow down, think through the task, and use the right tools and techniques. If something feels too heavy or unsafe stop and say something, get some help.

Work smart. Take care of your body. And go home feeling the same way you showed up.