



Lifting, pushing, and overreaching are common causes of strains and sprains.

Any job that requires you to sit, stand or bend in an awkward position for long periods of time can cause excess stress and strain on muscles. Most strains and sprains affect the back, arms, and shoulders. However, there are some very simple things you can do to prevent or minimize body strains and sprains.

Many strains and sprains occur because of **poor material handling**.

Injuries can occur when workers try to pull or lift a heavy or awkward object without help. Lifting an object while twisting from the waist can also cause strain injuries.

**Lift correctly** by bending your knees, not your back.

**Carry loads close** to your body.

**When carrying a load**, avoid bending or lifting upward unnecessarily.

**Keep** as much of the load as you can at waist level.

**Get help with heavy loads.** Do not try to move or lift an object you cannot handle.

Instead of lifting a 75-pound load, break it down into smaller parts. If you cannot break it down, get help from a mechanical device or another worker. Make sure moving equipment works properly or it will cause you to strain unnecessarily just trying to get it to work. If the wheels on a cart are not aligned, you could strain your arms, shoulders, and back just trying to move it.

**Change your working positions frequently.** Chronic strain due to an unchanging work position can weaken your back, arms, and shoulders.

**Adjust working heights** to prevent slumping or excessive reaching. A vicious cycle develops when chronic strain continues; muscles become less able to withstand strenuous activity and grow more prone to injury of all kinds.

**Stretch during the day** to increase your flexibility. Take body relaxation breaks by letting your shoulders and neck muscles go limp; swivel your head or arms or flex your hands and fingers.