
Preventing Strains, Sprains, and Struck By Incidents

Many of our daily activities involve lifting, pushing/pulling, bending, and twisting which can raise the risk of experiencing a strain or sprain. The identification of risk factors and control of exposures are keys to prevent these and struck by incidents. Here are some ways we can accomplish that:

- ✓ Lift correctly.
 - Test the weight of the item before you lift.
 - The safest lift is between your knees and middle of your chest.
 - Do not attempt to move students or objects weighing over your job-specific limit without mechanical assistance such as a lift, dolly, cart or help from a co-worker.
 - Keep loads and your work close to your body. Carrying or lifting items away from your body increases the pressure on your lower back.
- ✓ Work at the proper height and ergonomic positions.
 - Avoid storing heavy or frequently used items above shoulder level; keep these at waist level.
 - Use a ladder or stepstool...DO NOT stand on chairs, desk, counters, or tables.
 - Set up your workstation to minimize excessive reaching and awkward postures.
 - If items need to be stored overhead, stack them carefully and securely to prevent sliding or falling.
- ✓ Keep your work area free from common hazards.
 - Practice good housekeeping.
 - Set up classrooms and offices in a way that will eliminate or reduce the need for cords in walkways and aisles.
 - Instruct students to store backpacks and personal items off the ground.
 - Avoid the use of rugs as the edges tend to curl and get damaged over time.
 - Top heavy drawers can cause the entire cabinet to tip over. Drawers should be equal in weight and consider placing heavier items in the bottom or start loading files from the bottom, working up.
 - Open one filing drawer at a time and close them before walking away and when you're done with the task.
- ✓ When working with students:
 - Be on the lookout for behavior changes and use proper escalation identification techniques.
 - Avoid wearing items that can be grabbed; tuck away lanyards and consider pulling long hair back.
 - Layered clothing may reduce firm bite contact and scratch exposures to the skin.
 - Limit forward bending as much as possible and be aware of your body position relative to the student's so as not to encroach on their personal space particularly when they are having an outburst.
 - Access the [Behavior Resources](#) found on our website, and collaborate with your School Psychologist for positive behavioral techniques & recommendations to further support your students.
- ✓ Consider yourself an "athlete on the job."
 - Stretch often. Vary your tasks and change positions frequently throughout the day.
 - Select comfortable footwear that is appropriate for your job tasks and weather conditions. Close-toed shoes with good support is always a good choice and DO NOT wear flip-flops.
- ✓ Always be aware of your surroundings. Watch where you are going, use caution around corners and near doorways, and avoid distractions.
- ✓ Report any unsafe conditions and ensure that work orders are placed to correct hazards.