

Safety FOCUSED

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Back Strain: A Workplace Risk for Every Employee

Back injuries are common in the workplace. What's more, you do not need to work in the construction industry or a manual labour-intensive job to experience back problems. Read this article to learn how to avoid serious back injuries.

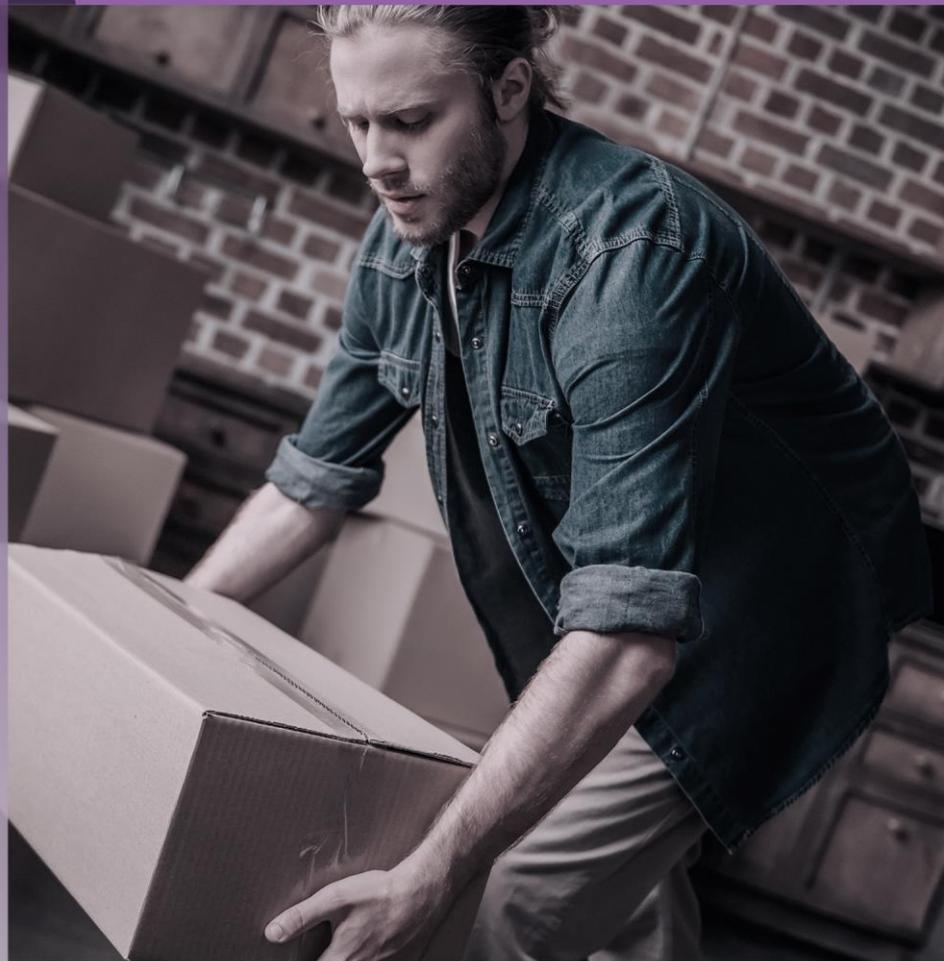
How Employees Can Improve Workplace Communication

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EMPLOYEES DO NOT NEED TO WORK IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY OR A MANUAL LABOUR-INTENSIVE JOB TO EXPERIENCE BACK PROBLEMS.



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Back Strain: A Workplace Risk for Every Employee

Back injuries are common in the workplace and are typically the result of a strain or sprain to back ligaments or muscles, the spinal cord, thoracic spine, lumbar spine, sacrum or coccyx. What's more, you do not need to work in a labour-intensive job to experience back problems. Employees of all kinds can maintain back health by keeping these tips in mind during their working day:

- Take small breaks throughout your working day and stretch regularly.
- Manage your stress level to reduce discomfort and back pain.
- Exercise and stay active to reduce your chances of developing back pain.
- Adjust your posture frequently.
- Position your desk chair so your feet are flat on the floor.
- Lift with your knees, and keep what you are lifting close to your body. Ask a co-worker to assist you when performing tasks that require heavy lifting, pushing, pulling or throwing.
- Drink enough water and eat a healthy diet. This helps keep your spinal discs hydrated and healthy.
- Watch where you walk. Many back strain injuries are the result of involuntary motion, like an attempt to recover from a slip.

It may also be a good idea to work with your manager to plan your working hours to help you avoid long periods of repetitive work.

How Employees Can Improve Workplace Communication

Communication is key in all aspects of life, but especially in the workplace. Without good communication, employees and productivity can suffer.

However, there are things you can do to establish better communication and improve the way things are done at your workplace. When it comes to interacting with your co-workers, keep in mind the following:

Make sure you are being clear and concise. This applies not only to face-to-face conversations, but also to emails and all other types of communication. Your messages should be complete and include everything you want to convey.

Listen carefully. Don't respond to what someone has said—aloud or in your head—until they have finished speaking. If you start thinking about a response before your co-worker has gotten their message across, you could miss important pieces of information and derail the conversation.

Summarise what you've said. After you've given a long-winded speech or written an extensive email, go over the basic, most important points. This will help refresh your listener's memory and potentially weed out opportunities for miscommunication.

Make meetings meaningful. Schedule a meeting to elaborate on complex tasks and make the most of scheduled time. Don't stray from the topic and keep conversations productive.

Follow up in writing. No matter how compelling a meeting or conversation was, it's likely that people will not remember everything that was shared. For important matters, follow up with an email that highlights key takeaways from the conversation or meeting.

Above all, it's important to be mindful of your body language and tone when you communicate. Together, these strategies ensure clear, effective correspondence.



5 WAYS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

1. AVOID CLICHÉS.

2. BE BRIEF.

3. BE SINCERE.

4. AVOID ARGUMENTS.

5. ALLOW OTHERS TO RESPOND WITHOUT INTERRUPTION.

