

Encourage workers to maintain a healthy back with exercise and rest

Back-related workplace injuries result in reduced productivity and increased absenteeism; however, employers can encourage their employees to strengthen their backs through exercise and rest.

The National Institutes of Health recommends the following methods to keep employees' backs free of injuries:

- **Partial sit-ups**

To strengthen stomach muscles: lie on back with both knees bent and feet flat on floor; slowly raise head and shoulders off the floor, keeping the hands across the chest; work up to 30 repetitions.

- **Bridges**

To strengthen lower back: lie on back with both knees bent and feet flat on floor; with arms lying on floor, tighten stomach muscles, squeeze buttocks, and slowly raise hips into air; hold for five seconds and slowly bring buttocks back to floor; repeat 20 times.

- **Wall slide**

To strengthen back and leg muscles: stand with back against a wall and feet slightly apart; slide into a half-sit; hold as long as possible and slide back up; repeat five times.

- **Aerobic exercise**

Aerobic exercise strengthens and stretches the muscles that support the lower back.

- **Proper rest**

It is also important to rest the back muscles.

Prevention strategies for accommodating older workers

CTDNews made the following recommendations to keep older workers safe on the job:

- **Increased risk: Musculoskeletal system**

Older workers will experience the greatest number of cases of lower back pain.

Prevention: Lift objects from waist level; provide adequate rest between repetitive lifting tasks; use mechanical aids; avoid lifting or reaching above shoulder level; incorporate job rotations.

- **Increased risk: Cardiovascular/respiratory**

Respiratory function declines 15 to 25 percent from age 20 to age 65.

Prevention: Avoid overtime; make breaks mandatory; reduce working hours, especially if work is physically demanding.

- **Increased risk: Slips and falls**

Injuries from falls are more common in older workers.

Prevention: Provide handrails and nonslip surfaces on stairs and treads; keep walkways free from obstructions.

- **Increased risk: Sensory systems**

A gradual reduction in vision, hearing, balance and reaction time occurs as people age.

Prevention: Reduce glare; avoid rooms that create echoes; increase lighting in offices and hallways.

For more information, contact CTSI at 303-861-0507 to speak to a Loss Prevention Specialist.

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