

Overexertion

Overexertion is an overextension of a bodies physical capabilities resulting in injury. They can be classified in two different categories: sprains and strains. A sprain is a stretching or tearing of the ligament. Strains are a stretching or tearing of the tendons or muscles. Many times these will be the result of working at a physically taxing job without proper rest breaks or by trying to lift or move heavy objects. It may also be caused by prolonged exposure to extreme temperatures. Overexertion in itself can be harmful, but the reduction in attention could lead to an accident. Contributing factors could include: loss of body flexibility due to aging, poor physical condition, and being overweight.

Overexertion injuries may be associated with lifting, repeated or long term bending at the waist, bending at the waist while twisting, pushing/pulling, carrying, reaching, and sitting while absorbing vibration through the body. Signs of overexertion are:

- Dizziness
- Extreme shortness of breath or labored breathing
- Sore and painful muscles
- An exercise pulse that is higher than recommended for your size and physical condition and does not slow after exercising has ended.
- Irregular or fluttering heart beat
- Nausea
- Chest pain
- Feeling very hot and perspiring profusely
- Low abdominal pain
- Blue lips and fingers
- Lack of coordination

A good practice that might help prevent these types of injuries is to perform the task twice. Perform the task once with your mind and determine what has to done to perform a task safely. Then, once with your body by following through with your plan. Some ways to plan your work are:

Good Lifting Techniques:

- Determine the approximate weight of the load.
- Be sure you have stable footing and the path of travel is clear.
- Bend at the knees.
- Keep the load as close to your body as possible.
- Keep your back straight.
- Avoid any sort of twisting.
- Lighten any heavy loads if possible.
- If heavy loads can not be lightened – GET HELP. This is a good idea for anything over 50 pounds.

Reducing Reaching:

- Remove any obstacles that may make work awkward.
- Slide the work as close to you as possible.
- Reduce shelf depth and try to store products between knee and shoulder height. Lift table may be used to keep heavy loads at the proper height. Another way to reduce bending may be to add handles to the object that requires lifting.
- Reduce the depth of a package size.
- Install gravity feed racks.

Reducing Lifting Hazards:

- Use mechanical devices where possible.
- Perform a team lift.
- In some cases, it may be appropriate to slide the object to its desired location.