



# PLAYING IT **SAFE**

## **Sprain and Strain Prevention**

*Helpful tips for reducing workplace injuries*

Over six million injuries occur in the workplace every year. Sprains, strains, and tears to muscles and connective tissues are some of the most common injuries workers experience.

Sprains and strains can result from lifting injuries, being hit by fallen objects or even a simple misstep. Overusing your muscles can also cause these injuries. Protect yourself and others from these painful injuries by always practicing safety on the job.

### **Sprains**

Sprains occur when a ligament has been stretched too far from its normal position. Sprains of the fingers, wrists, knees and ankles are most common.

### **Strains**

Strains are the result of pulling too far on a muscle or by pulling a muscle in one direction while it is contracting. Strains can also be caused by repetitive movements that lead to an over-stretching of muscle fibers. Strains of the back, neck, groin and hamstring are most common.

### **Tips for Prevention**

To help reduce your risk of sprains and strains while on the job, keep these tips in mind:

- If you are lifting something particularly heavy, use extreme caution. When in doubt, ask for help with the lift.
- Reduce repetitive movements if possible; chronic strains are usually the result of overuse.
- Use proper form while completing tasks and avoid extensive gripping, which can increase the risk of hand and forearm strains.
- Practice safety measures to help prevent falls. Avoid slippery surfaces, and always use harnesses and nets if applicable.
- Wear proper attire, including footwear, gloves and other applicable protective equipment.
- Consider your posture when sitting for long periods of time; maintain an overall relaxed position.
- Maintain a healthy fitness level outside of work to keep your body strong and flexible.
- Stretch before you begin working, and take short breaks throughout the day to stretch and rebalance your body.



### **Did You Know?**

Sprains occur when a ligament has been stretched too far from its normal position. This injury commonly occurs in fingers, wrists, knees and ankles.

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