

Lifting, Transporting, and Strains

Strain injuries are one of the top four injuries types, when looking at both cost and frequency. Strain injuries are also easily preventable! To prevent strain injuries, remember what actually *causes* back injuries:



Stocking Shelves



Taking Out Trash



Proper Storage

Preventing Back Injuries and Other Types of Strains

Teaching and enforcing of the proper lifting procedures is an important part of your safety program. Stress the basics of proper lifting during training and follow-up. Make lifting a discussion during a safety team meeting. Always discuss the causes for any injuries that have occurred as a result of improper lifting.

Once Crew Members have been properly trained, **it is up to you to enforce proper lifting.** Back injuries and strains may be caused by lifting even light weight items improperly, or lifting items that are too heavy for a Crew Member. Soda syrup boxes, boxes of beef patties, packed garbage, and the old 4 gallon tea buckets can weight 40lbs or more.

Remember – not all Crew Members are the same. What may be safe for one Crew Member to lift may not be safe for another Crew Member. Take into account the Crew Member's physical conditioning, medical history, prior injuries, or other disabilities that may contribute to back injuries and other types of strains. Those Crew Members should be trained to ask for help, use carts, or make extra trips to avoid injury. It is your job as a manager to enforce these rules, and let other Crew Members know to assist where needed.

Enforcement of safety lifting is the key to preventing back injuries and other types of strains. Since many of these costly injuries occur over the long term, many do not realize that they are hurting their backs, until the actually strain occurs. Enforcement of safe lifting must start on Day One.

Where Lift and Strain Injuries Start

- ✓ *Lifting Too Many Objects* – The Crew Member may consider this working efficiently, but carrying too many objects not only contributes to strains, but also contributes to dropped/damaged product and trips/falls. One back injury can stop an employee from working altogether – **it is your job to enforce correct lifting**, and prevent them from carrying multiple heavy objects.
- ✓ *Stacking of Heavy Objects* – **Place and store heavy items on the middle shelves.** Doing this will help to reduce the need to lift, and in the case of storing heavy items higher up, will also reduce potential of being struck by heavy loads. As a rule, heavy items should be stored at waist to chest height to reduce lifting.
- ✓ *Use Proper Equipment* – **Carts may be used to reduce the chance of lifting and carrying injuries.** As a rule, **if the object weighs over 25lbs, a cart should be used to assist in the transport.** Carts may also increase efficiency. Where a Crew Member would only carry one item at a time, a cart may allow multiple items to be carried. Also, where possible, break down items prior to carrying, or **use items such as 2 gallon tea buckets to reduce the weight** of the object lifted. As a manager, it is up to use to ensure that these rules are enforced.
- ✓ *Do not toss garbage bags into dumpsters.* Lift them carefully and seek help as needed. Liquids from drink cups can make a bag of garbage especially heavy. Use Carts and Bins. Test the load and lift carefully!
- ✓ *Protect Crew Members with Pre-Existing Conditions* – **As a manager, you must know your Crew Members limitations** and ensure that their restrictions are followed. Restrictions may mean that they do not lift tea buckets, syrup boxes, bags of trash, beef patties, etc. Other crew members should be aware not to ask those who have existing conditions to lift heavy objects.

