

="I've got your back!"

This is a currently common expression. It means "I'll support you" or "I'll back you up if you're in trouble."

So, what about **your** back? You're really the one who has it--physically, that is.

Back injuries are one of the most commonly occurring injuries both occupationally and also in off-the-job activities. What can we do about controlling this type of injury?

Back Injury Prevention

First of all, prevention is the key, as is the case with all injuries. Let's look at some of the key elements in back injury prevention:

- Don't try to be Superman. If someone is assigned a task beyond his mental capabilities, he will usually tell his supervisor, "I do not know how to do that," or make some similar statement. Why should he attempt to perform some task beyond his physical capabilities? Get help!
- Size up the load before lifting (or otherwise moving) it. Some packages are much heavier than they appear. The dimensions of a load are not the only indicator of the weight! So attempt to push the load slightly with your foot before "snatching and grabbing" the load.
- Be sure the path is safe. Before carrying a load from Point A to Point B, look at the floor along the planned path of travel. There should be no obstacles or spilled fluids in the way. Many back injuries or other muscular strains occur because the person carrying the load slips or stumbles, causing a sudden shift in the load.
- Limber up before lifting. All athletes know the importance of some basic calisthenics prior to beginning a physically-demanding contest. The same applies to any of us who is preparing even a "minor" load. Stretching exercises are critical prior to any manual lifting, especially in the early morning before the body is warm and flexible.

Post injury care.

- What should I do if I still receive a muscular injury? Back injury specialists suggest that certain treatments be applied as soon as possible to reduce the extent of a strain or sprain injury.
 1. Take aspirin.
 2. Apply ice to the affected area.
 3. Massage the muscle.The key is **AIM - aspirin, ice, massage.**
- Of course, if the back strain occurs on the job, it is important to report the strain immediately, even if the worker feels he/she can "walk it off" and the strain will be better with a little exercise. This does often occur, but sometimes it becomes an injury requiring medical treatment!

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