

# SAFETY BRAKE

## BACK SAFETY

Within the Commercial Motor Carrier and transportation industry, you are exposed to a variety of situations where injuries can occur. Of the most common of those injuries, are sprains, strains, tears, and soreness related to back injuries. Employees can injure their backs by improper lifting of moderate to heavy objects, falling, auto accidents, and muscle tightness due to lack of movement (driving for extended periods of time). Of these, lifting improperly is the largest single cause of back pain and injury. You can help employees prevent back injuries and pain by training on proper lifting techniques.

Lower back problems are a frequent cause of lost work time and compensation. 2018 Bureau of Labor Statistics data published in November 2019 said that 40,660 musculoskeletal injuries occurred within our industry and accounted for over 30% of days away from work.

Lifestyle and some activities can lead to back pain and injury. Here are a few common injuries that can occur:

- ◆ Strains and sprains can result from injury to muscles and ligaments that support the back. A torn ligament will result in severe back pain.
- ◆ Ruptured or slipped disk is not uncommon and results in the disk pressing on a nerve, causing severe pain and restriction of movement.
- ◆ Chronic tension, stress, or lack of stretching the back muscles can result in muscle spasms or injury because the muscles are not prepared for the weight of the object being lifted.

Stretching before lifting objects can prepare the body for the stress and exertion of the lifting. Bending your knees is the single most important rule when lifting heavy objects. Take a tip from professional weight-lifters: They can lift tremendous weights because they lift with their legs, not their backs. When lifting a crate or box, employees should:

- ◆ Stretch before attempting the lift
- ◆ Place their feet close to the object and center themselves over the load
- ◆ Bend the knees and get a good hold on the object being lifted
- ◆ Lift straight up, smoothly
- ◆ Allow the legs, not the back, to do the work

1. [https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/osh/os/summ1\\_00\\_2018.htm](https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/osh/os/summ1_00_2018.htm)

**3250 Interstate Drive | Richfield, OH 44286-9000 | National 800-929-1500 | Vanliner 800-325-3619**

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### Knowledge Check

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Read each statement carefully and circle the response that best answers the question.

1. True or False: Musculoskeletal disorders account for over 30% of days away from work.
 

A) True	B) False
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2. True or False: Stretching before lifting objects can prepare the body for the stress and exertion of the lifting.
 

A) True	B) False
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Answers: 1) A, 2) A

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