



# Back Safety Checklist

Back injuries are among the most common in the U.S. workplace – more than one million suffer an injury each year.

## ■ Types of back pain

- Often the result of years of contributing factors, not one single event
- Muscle strain
- Injured disc
- Ligament and joint damage

## ■ Risk factors

- Awkward posture
- Overexertion
- Fatigue
- Repetition

## ■ How can back injuries be prevented?

- **Use carts and dollies where possible**
- **Ask for help with heavy loads**
- **Always use proper lifting techniques**
- **Stretch before lifting**
- **Avoid sitting or standing for extended periods of time**
- **Slow down during heavy, repetitive lifting and take rest breaks to stretch again**

## ■ What's the proper way to lift?

- **Test the load's weight**
- **Place feet shoulder-width apart and close to object**
- **Bend the knees**
- **Get a secure grip**
- **Lift with the legs, keeping back straight**
- **Lift evenly and slowly with the load kept close to your body**
- **Avoid twisting torso while carrying load; to change directions, use feet**

## ■ What if I have back pain?

- Rest your back and avoid heavy lifting
- For pain relief:
  - Apply cold for first 48 hours
  - Apply heat after 48 hours
  - Use over-the-counter pain relievers
- Consult physician if:
  - Pain persists after resting 72 hours
  - Pain is the result of specific injury
  - You have fever, nausea, stomach pain, weakness or sweating
  - You have a feeling of numbness in your lower limbs