

# PREVENTING SPRAINS AND STRAINS

## SAFETY TALK

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Although sprains and strains of the ligaments or tendons can occur anywhere, the industrial setting provides many opportunities for them to happen. Sprains and strains are not the same thing. A sprain is when a ligament has torn; a strain is when the ligament or tendon has been stretched too far.

The most common cause of a sprain or strain is improper material handling.

### CHECKLIST

- Before you begin, size up the job. Is there a better way? Look for ways to eliminate or reduce lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, and carrying whenever possible.
- Ask for help when the load is heavy, awkward, or unstable.
- Make sure there are no slipping or tripping hazards in your work area. The sudden jerk caused by a slip or trip can cause a sprain or strain.
- Don't overextend yourself — use a stepstool or ladder when lifting above shoulder height.
- Take a lesson from athletes and don't rush into a job cold. Warm up your muscles first.
- Hold the load close.
- Avoid twisting your body while handling a load.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What areas of your job have the potential for sprains or strains?
2. What can you do to minimize the chance for these injuries?
3. Are there any specific points or problems you wish to discuss?

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