

Back

Safety

When lifting, **DON'T TWIST!** Remember to move your feet to turn.

Aging and Disease

As we age, the muscles in our backs lose their strength and ability to function. One of the disks in your spine can "slip" out of place, and press on the nerves in your back. Osteoarthritis, a form of arthritis, can cause back pain, as well as kidney and prostate problems.

Tension and Stress

Tight and knotted muscles which are caused by tension and stress can cause muscle spasms and back pain.

YOU CAN PREVENT MOST BACK INJURIES BY:

- Improving your strength and fitness – Daily Stretching
- Learning the proper "body mechanics" for posture, lifting, moving, and carrying.

Out-of-Shape
Your overall physical condition can affect your back. If your back muscles are weak, or if you have put on a few pounds, your back must work harder. Making your back work harder can lead to back pain.

Poor Posture

Standing, sitting, or lying down incorrectly will put strain on your spine. Your spine is designed to operate best when it is in a "natural S" shape. Bending this natural S out of shape for long periods of time can often lead to muscle fatigue and back pain. This is why you stretch backwards when you experience back tension. Without thinking, you are trying to adjust your spine back to its natural S shape.

When you lift, maintain your back's natural curve and let your legs do the work!

Assess the situation before lifting/carrying objects.

- How far to carry the load?
- Is the way clear of clutter, cords, slippery areas, overhangs?
- Are there stairs, curbs, or uneven surfaces?
- Will there be doors that are closed?
- Once you get the load up, will you be able to see over the load, or will the load block your view?
- Can the load be disassembled, carried in pieces, then reassembled?
- Find a cart, lifting device, or request assistance (Buddy Lift)

Exercise is an important role in keeping your back strong, healthy, and flexible. A properly exercised back is less likely to be injured. Your physician can recommend the best exercises for you, taking into account your physical condition.

