

ble to maintain proper posture while working. Prolonged sitting or standing, particularly in uncomfortable positions, can cause muscle fatigue, which can lead to leg and back problems. Work stations or practices which cause workers to stand, stoop, reach, or twist improperly can also promote sprains and strains.

Attempting to lift or otherwise physically move one heavy object, or repetitive moves of even light-weight objects, are other causes of sprains and strains, as are slips, trips, falls, and jumps.

Prevention of Injuries

Design Modification

Two methods of reducing sprains and strains are to redesign the work area and to modify work practices. Actually, it might be possible to eliminate the lifting, pushing, and pulling entirely by available mechanical means. For example, heavy items may be moved with a forklift, conveyor, or hand truck.

Another design modification may involve changing the size, shape, or weight of the container. This has been done in many areas. For example, feed, seed, and fertilizer bags in the 80- or 100-pound sizes are no longer common. Nevertheless, many objects are still difficult to handle. Easier, safer methods of moving or lifting materials should be sought constantly.

Work stations for workers who spend long hours standing or seated must be designed to reduce stress

to the back and legs. A cushioned floor, a low footrest that enables workers to raise and lower their legs, and a work table of proper height are all important.

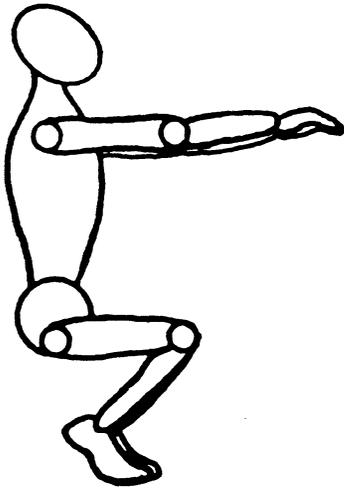
Seated workers should be at a height comfortable for their work. The knees should be slightly higher than the hips, and a footrest should be provided. The seat should provide support for the lower back. Finally, the work should be arranged to minimize stooping, excessive reaching, and twisting at the waist.

Work Practice Modifications

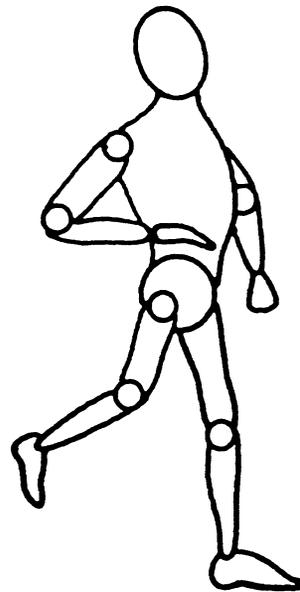
Workers can modify their own work practices:

- Lift objects comfortably, not necessarily the quickest or easiest way.
- Lift, push, and pull with your legs, not your arms or back.
- When changing direction while moving an object, turn with your feet, not by twisting at the waist.
- Avoid lifting above shoulder height. Use a step-stool or ladder to move objects to these heights.
- When sitting, sit with your knees slightly higher than your hips, with a firm backrest for your lower back. Move, cross, and uncross your legs often.
- Sit in a vehicle as you sit in a chair, with your knees slightly above your hips. Also, provide support for your lower back.

ase Flexibility



Straight back bend: Assume the standing position, feet no more than six inches apart, arms to your side. Bend at the hips and knees until thighs are parallel to the floor. Hold for five seconds, raise to standing position. Repeat the exercise five times.



Overall conditioning: If physical activity is not part of your daily routine, regular aerobic exercise should be. Aerobic exercise, such as jogging, walking, or swimming, will help keep your body in condition.

Again, these types of activities should be done only with the approval of your physician.