

# PREVENTING SORE BACKS



## **Preventing Sore Backs Toolbox Talk**

The back is made up of four major parts. The spine, nerves, muscles, and the spinal cord. There are thirty-three bones in the spine and thirty-one pairs of nerves branching out from the spinal cord. All of them must work together. If they don't, you could end up with anything from a strain to a ruptured disk, fractured vertebrae, and/or a debilitating disease like arthritis.

Your back is the foundation and the structure upon which the rest of your body relies for balance and support. Used improperly, or unsafely, your back can suffer injuries that can literally change the way you live.

Care of your back is a lifelong endeavor that requires commitment, intelligence, and common sense. Remember that back care isn't just about lifting properly, it is also about proper diet, exercise, reducing stress, eliminating hazards where possible. Just as the health of your back can affect your lifestyle, your lifestyle and work habits can affect the health of your back.

### **Points to Remember:**

1. Size up the load: Can you safely lift it alone, or do you need help from another employee?
2. Inspect the route you will use while carrying the load. Look for tripping hazards, be sure you have adequate room to maneuver, and check for proper lighting.
3. Keep your hands free of oil, grease, or other substances that prevent a firm grasp. Don't use damaged gloves.
4. Get a firm grasp on the load, and make sure you have a solid footing before beginning to lift.
5. Bend with your knees and keeping your back straight while lifting.
6. Keep lifted loads close to your body.
7. Keep fingers away from the edges of loads to avoid pinches, especially when carrying loads through doors or setting loads down.
8. Create and maintain easy access to piles and stacked materials.