

The Game of BIP

Do you know what is at the center of your daily physical activity? Whether on the job, or off? Yes! It is your lower back. Back health is paramount to a smooth, productive workday. That is why Back Injury Prevention (BIP) should be a daily priority. Here's why and how!

We are all industrial athletes; and as we've seen so many times, athletes warm-up prior to performing a game. They stretch, strengthen, and warm-up their muscles. Each day before we begin work, we need to warm-up, especially on colder days below 60 degrees or after long periods of continual sitting or standing. Stretch the major muscle groups- arms, legs and back. They are all connected.

Before performing work task, we need to do a quick mental checklist. Ask – what the weather like? Do I feel okay and am I ready for the assignments ahead? Do I have the appropriate shoes & clothing to perform? Do I need to double-team the task or do we need “Little Moe”, the forklift, to get the job done without risk of injury? If we have to make a manual lift, follow the Safe Lifting Techniques (see the checklist.)

During the workday, all of us need to understand that we will have some back pain at times. Pain is our body's “early warning system.” The pain lets us know we are over stressing our body's center point- the low back. Most back pain starts small and grows if we do not change our lifestyle. We need appropriate rest, diet, exercise, strengthening, and stretching. Our lifestyles have become a bit hectic- eating on the run (gain weight), working hurriedly (no warm-up, improper lifting, poor housekeeping), and spending our off-duty hours cramming as much activity in as possible (too little rest) OR becoming a couch potato- getting too much rest.) We need to evaluate our lifestyle daily and keep a balanced life to prevent back injury. Suddenly, we arrive at middle-age. We look in the mirror and realize we are 25 pounds heavier and have “done-lap disease”- when the belly done over-lapping the belt and you can't see your toes. This multiplies additional life stresses. We don't move as well at work subjecting us to injury.

Also, take good care of your feet; they carry you everywhere. Place new comfortable insoles in your work-boots 2-3 times per year to keep your legs, knees and back from feeling extra stress. A little cushioning goes a long way.

Well, there you have it, a quick glimpse of the present and the future if we don't have a BIP game plan. Are you ready to work safely? Take good care of you and your back!