

SAFETY AMBASSADOR

OVEREXERTION



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Do you know what Overexertion is?

Is it when you are tired? Is it an injury that happens when you do one task too long, such as entering data on a computer for long periods of time?

Defining Overexertion

- A non-impact injury resulting from *excessive physical effort*
 - Lifting
 - Pulling
 - Pushing
 - Turning
 - Welding
 - Holding
 - Carrying
 - Throwing
- Most common injuries are strains and sprains, especially of the back
- Affects people differently

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Overexertion may be thought of as the feeling after a hard workout. Actually, overexertion is a major cause of the inflammation of joints and ligaments that results from excessive physical effort. Excessive physical effort affects people differently: for some people it may cause little or no pain or discomfort and for some it may be debilitating.

Facilitator Note: As an option, you may ask your audience to raise their hands or to share experiences using these questions.

Have you ever experienced an overexertion injury? What were you doing at the time?

Current Data

- Widespread problem:
 - #2 nonfatal injury after falls in general population: 4.6 million medically-consulted episodes in '06
 - #1 cause of nonfatal disabling work injuries
 - #6 among Emergency Department visits: 1.8 million in 2005
 - #1 Cause of DAFW: 298,000 cases in 2006



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Overexertion is a serious and chronic problem that affects many people. They also result in many non-fatal injuries.

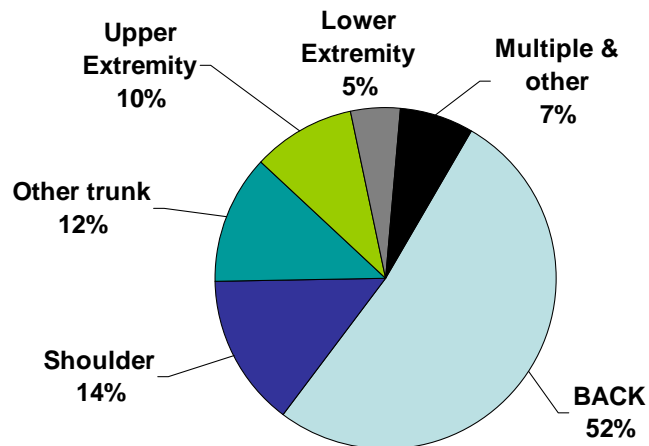
Medically -consulted injuries include: use of emergency vehicle or emergency room; visit to a doctor's office or other health clinic; phone call to a doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional.

Emergency Department visits are estimated using a nationally representative sample of US hospital Emergency Departments.

Do you know what DAFW is? DAFW = days away from work.

Understanding Data

Overexertion by Part of Body *Workplace Data*



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



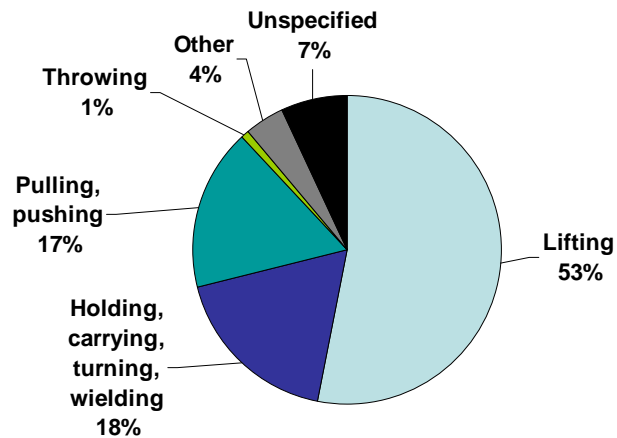
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Overexertion causes sprains, strains and pain, More than half of the injuries are to your back.

Understanding Data

Overexertion by Detailed Event *Workplace Data*



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

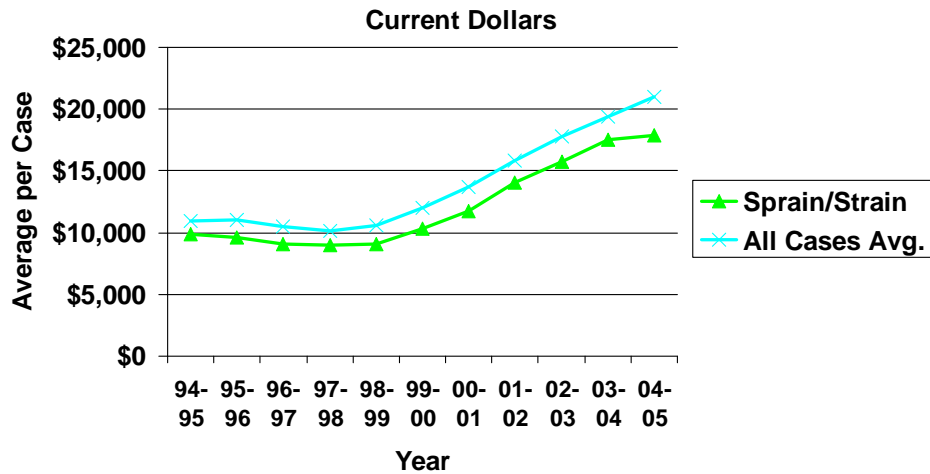


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Overexertion injuries can result from a variety of different activities. However, more than half result when lifting objects.

Sprain/Strain Incurred Costs



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There is no workers' compensation data for overexertion, but we know that 78% of overexertion results in a sprain or strain. Overexertion is an expensive problem. The costs to treat sprains and strains are rising and exceed the average of all cases.

Understanding Data

- Workplace overexertion injuries in decline but too high
- Injury occurs in most occupations but rates highest for:
 - Nursing aids and orderlies
 - EMTs and paramedics
 - Laborers and material handlers
- Injuries most often occur in the first 2 to 4 hours of starting work



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While injuries that occur in the workplace are declining, they are still the leading cause of non-fatal injuries.

It may be surprising to learn that injuries are more likely to occur earlier, and not later, in a work shift.

Understanding Data

- Most overexertion injuries occur in the first half of the day
- Injury rates are higher among males
- Overexertion injury spans all ages, but peak in the 35-44 age group
- Injuries occurring at home or in the community are increasing

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Males are more likely than females to experience an injury from overexertion. Injuries cross all ages but the highest rates are in the working age groups. Declines in workplace injuries are offset by the increase in overexertion injuries occurring at home or in the community.

Solution/Prevention

- Protect your back, use safe lifting techniques
- Practice these basics:
 - Stretch and warm up before lifting
 - Never bend or twist the back when lifting
 - Never lift with arms extended
 - Make sure your footing is solid
 - Lift with your legs, not your back
 - Limit the amount of weight you carry
 - Get help to carry heavy, bulky or large loads



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It is important to learn how to lift properly or always to use proper lifting techniques, at work and at home. Some of the common failures are lifting a load that is too heavy, too large, or contains a load that shifts.

Facilitator: Consider demonstrating proper lifting techniques. If presenting in the workplace, review any policies related to lifting.

Solution/Prevention

- Receive proper training to use tools and equipment
- Keep tools and equipment in good condition
- Allow enough space to work in a neutral position
- Take short rests in between strenuous activities
- At work, report any discomfort or injury experienced when working



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Learn how to properly use tools and equipment to avoid twisting and other movements that cause strains or sprains. Keep tools and equipment in good shape so they require less effort to use.

Short breaks are important for recovery. Practice what you do when exercising, such as lifting weights, where it is important to take a brief rest before repeating a routine.

Facilitator Note: If presenting in the workplace, cover your company's policy on what to do and how to report injuries.

Solution/Prevention

- Begin each day with light warm-up exercises and stretching
- Routinely exercise* to strengthen your joints without overexerting by doing low-impact exercises such as swimming, cycling or walking
- Consult a medical professional immediately if you experience joint pain or discomfort

*First consult with a medical professional if ≥ 35 years old or a smoker



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Stretching at the beginning of the day helps to prevent injuries. How many of you begin your day by stretching or warming up? There is a reason why athletes perform better when they warm up. Your warm up will let you ease comfortably into the workday, whether at work or at home. That will help you avoid injuries.

Keeping in shape builds muscle strength and supports better posture that helps prevent back strain and pain. When you slouch or slump often, it may indicate your muscles are weak.

If you experience pain or joint discomfort it is important to seek medical help. If you are not exercising regularly and you are 35 years or older OR you smoke, it is important to see a medical professional before beginning an exercise program.

NSC Strategy to Address Data

- Document science and evaluate solutions
- Develop programs
- Legislation: connect national to local interests
- Develop recognized expertise
- Partnerships
- Develop NSC public policy statements
- Work the issue at every level



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The National Safety Council is aggressively addressing this key area of concern because of the high number of injuries and deaths. The NSC is also:

- Documenting the science behind falls prevention, including the scope, causes, and proven solutions
- Influencing federal- and state-level policy to promote falls prevention as a social priority
 - Objective: to increase funding of CDC (Centers for Disease Control) falls prevention research and public education
 - Connect local interests to the national advocacy program – need local pressure on your member of Congress
- Developing new programs and products to increase education and awareness and encourage wide-spread enforcement of best practices

Additionally, the National Safety Council is building a national community of experts and partners to address this problem.

You Can Get Involved

Draw attention to the problem

- Share what you learned today and encourage others to learn more
 - nsc.org National Safety Council website
 - cdc.gov Center for Disease Control website
- Promote overexertion prevention during National Safety Month (June) nsc.org/nsm
- Provide training: nsc.org/train
- Donate to Friends of Safety – nsc.org



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There are many ways you can join the National Safety Council to help your organization and your community prevent overexertion. The NSC website offers a variety of information. Every June, you can participate in National Safety Month – a NSC event to increase awareness and educate the public about safety.

The intent is simple: Help ensure your loved ones don't receive a call about an injury that you can prevent.