

For Your Safety: Lift With Your Head

A back injury from manually moving materials is one of the most common types of accident in the recycling industry. Back injuries can be prevented by “thinking before doing.” Consider the following before moving something heavy:

- **Think!** Think about what you’re doing. Can it be moved with a piece of equipment? Ask a co-worker to help if the job really requires two people. The time it takes to do the job right is minimal to a lifetime of back pain.
- **Plan Your Route Before You Lift.** Figure out where you are going before you lift. Make sure the pathway is clear, doors are open and you know where to place the material when you get there.
- **When Lifting:**
 - Feet should be shoulder width apart.
 - Keep your back straight and tighten your stomach muscles.
 - Bend your knees to let your legs do the lifting – remember "Legs Lift. Backs Break."
 - Hug the load. Keep what you are carrying close to the body to reduce stress on your back.
 - Avoid twisting while carrying. Keep your knees, feet and chest aligned at all times. Turn you whole body not just your torso.

For Your Health: Exercise Builds Strong Backs

You can minimize problems with back pain with exercises that make the muscles in your back, stomach, hips and thighs strong and flexible. Being active in recreational activities like running, walking or bike riding will not only increase back strength but will also reduce stress. In addition, there are specific exercises that are directed toward strengthening and stretching your back, stomach, hip and thigh muscles. Before beginning any exercise program, you should discuss the program with your doctor and follow the doctor's advice.

For Your Information: You Only Have One Back

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than one million workers suffer back injuries each year, and back injuries account for one of every five workplace injuries or illnesses. Further, one-fourth of all lost time incidents involve back injuries, costing employers billions of dollars.

The back is one of the largest, most complex systems in human body. It is directly involved in almost every movement the body makes. Damaging this system by over lifting or improper lifting can lead to a life of pain, discomfort and limited movement from which there is no escape. You can't leave back pain at work. It will follow you wherever you go.

This e-mail was produced by the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc. For more information visit us on the web at www.ISRI.org.

For comments or suggestions about *For Your Safety*, email barneyboynton@isri.org