



Today our safety training will be on proper body mechanics.

GOAL

The goal of this training is to increase awareness of proper body mechanics to prevent back or other injuries.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this training, you should be able to

- Understand the importance of proper body mechanics
- Know how to avoid injuries that poor body mechanics can create
- Know different techniques for correct posture in common activities

WHY IS PROPER BODY MECHANICS IMPORTANT?

First let's define what we mean when we say "body mechanics". Does anyone want to explain what you think it means?

Body mechanics is a term used to describe the ways we move as we go about our daily lives. It includes how we hold our bodies when we sit, stand, lift, bend, and sleep. Good body mechanics are based on good posture and is when the spine is in a "neutral" or sloppy "S" position like the picture to the right.

We rarely ever put much thought into it, but Proper technique is crucial when we are performing tasks like lifting, vacuuming, sweeping, washing dishes, reaching for objects, etc. Think about the ways the tasks we do throughout the day. What ways do you think we put stress or strain on our bodies without realizing it? Sometimes we twist instead of pivoting. (Show how to pivot.) Sometimes we overreach because we get lazy and don't want to get a stool. Sometimes we end up lifting with our backs instead of using our legs. These are all things we are all guilty of at some point maybe at work or maybe at home, but we want to make sure we improve these behaviors moving forward. We don't just perform these tasks at work though, we do them at home as well, so it's equally important for us to practice proper techniques outside of work, too. Poor technique can lead to low back pain, shoulder pain, and neck pain and could create knee problems to name a few which can affect your quality of life. Remember, we can't predict the severity of any injury, but some injuries could potentially affect your ability to take care of yourself or even just be with the ones we love.

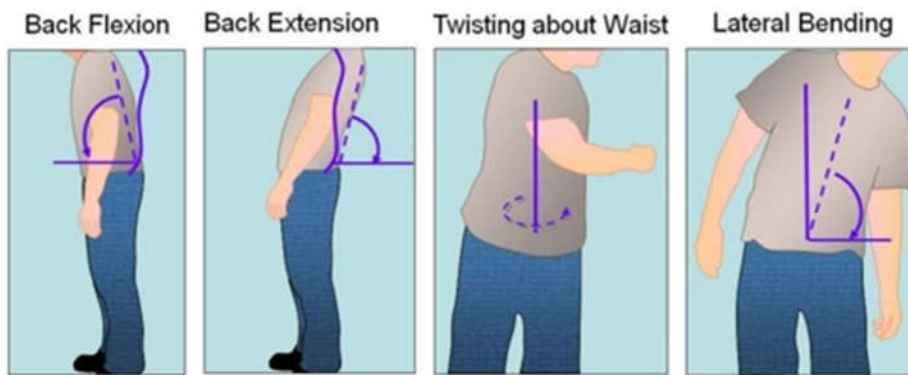


Your spine is the backbone of your ability to move, sleep, and function properly. Without a healthy spine, your everyday tasks and movements such as sitting up straight, walking, and moving around can become extremely difficult or painful. How many backs do you have? Right! We only have one back. It's not the same as our arms or hands where if we injure one, we can use the other. We only have one back so we must do everything we can to properly take care of it.



INJURY PREVENTION

To prevent injuries, one of the things you should keep in mind is to avoid putting any part of your body in awkward positions. If you feel discomfort, pain, or other symptoms while performing a task, you could potentially be putting your body in an awkward position and may need to change the way you are doing the job. Take a look at how you are positioning your body to ensure you are not overstretching or twisting your body. Check your posture, too. Make sure you are positioning yourself close to the work area as safely possible to avoid overreaching. Try your best to maintain good posture and avoid twisting.



EXAMPLES OF AWKWARD BODY POSITIONS



KNOWLEDGE CHECK *True or False?*

1. I only need to practice proper body mechanics at work. **False!** You must practice good body mechanics even when you're not at work. Remember, you only have one back. If you injure it at home, it could affect your ability to work, not to mention your quality of life.
2. Some ways I can prevent injuries include avoiding awkward body positions and maintaining good posture. **True!** Here's a tip. Every time you check to see what time it is or how much longer till you go home, remind yourself to check your posture as well.

CORRECT POSTURES

Here are some ways to help maintain good posture when performing different activities.

PARTIAL GOLF PICK-UP

This is a good way to retrieve items without putting all the stress on your lower back.

- Be sure to place one hand on a stable surface. **It's important to note that the key words here are stable surface. What are some examples of a stable surface in our work area here?**
- Retrieve item while keeping your back straight and pivoting at your hips.
- Move the object as close to you as possible before lifting it up.
- Keep one leg straight behind you to balance your weight as you reach forward.



THE HALF KNEEL LIFT

This may be helpful when lifting objects from a low shelf or table.

- Stand close to the object to be lifted and squat down onto one knee.
- Keep your back straight. Pick up the object, slide it on to your thigh and then cradle the object against your body.
- Tighten your stomach muscles and slowly stand, using your leg muscles, **not your back**.



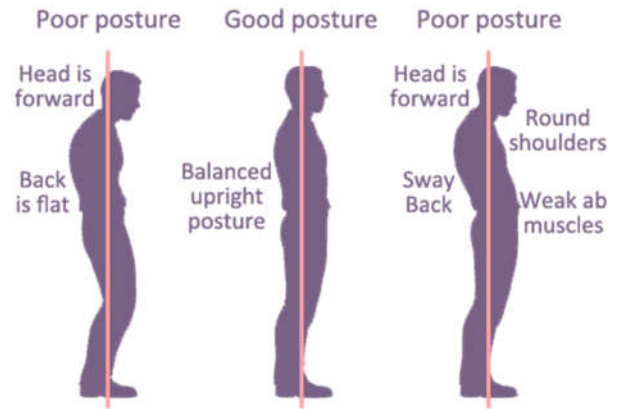
This is pretty similar to regular lifting techniques. What you want to remember is to use your leg muscles. (It is suggested that you have a box ready as a prop and ask for a volunteer to show the proper way to do the half kneel lift. Make sure the employee is keeping their back straight and keeping the box (or other prop) close to their body when they are demonstrating the lift.)

STANDING

There's a safe way to do things even as simple as standing. We don't always think about it, but sometimes we let our posture slip. Let's take a look at how we're standing/sitting right now—are you using proper posture? We all need to make it a habit to check our posture throughout the day to make certain we are practicing good posture.

Some tips when you're standing are to :

- Keep your knees slightly bent/unlocked.
- Maintain a neutral spine.
- Make sure that your hips are not shifting forward –there should be a fairly straight line from your ear to your shoulder to your hips to your ankle.
- If you will be standing for an extended period, use a small step and alternate having one foot on the step, then the other.
- Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes, and use an anti-fatigue mat.



WHEN PUSHING

Pushing is another common activity, but are you pushing the safe way? When pushing loads or objects, do you do the following?

- Use the weight of your body to help push an object. Be careful not to use your back.
- Keep your feet apart just as in the standing position.
- Keep you back straight.
- Lower your body to get close to the object. Bend at your knees. **DO NOT BEND AT YOUR WAIST.**
- If the object you are pushing is too heavy, ask someone to help you.



THE TAKEAWAYS

If you remember nothing else about this training, at least remember the following.

1. Practice good body mechanics at work and at home.
2. Try your best to maintain good posture and avoid twisting.
3. Always ask for help if an object is too heavy to lift or push.





TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Alright, let's see how many of you absorbed the information we just talked about.

1. Proper body mechanics is important to practice both at work and at home.
 - a. True. Getting injured at home could also affect your ability to work, so we must stay safe and healthy both on and off the job.
 - b. False.
2. Without a _____, your everyday tasks and movements such as sitting up straight, walking, and moving around can become extremely difficult or painful.
 - a. Long spine
 - b. Straight spine
 - c. Healthy Spine.
3. You should avoid putting your body in awkward positions.
 - a. True. Doing so could result in injuries. Let's avoid injuries by avoiding awkward positions.
 - b. False
4. If objects are too heavy to lift or push you should _____.
 - a. Tell yourself you can do it.
 - b. Just leave it there and forget about doing the task.
 - c. Inform your supervisor or ask for help. Lifting heavy or awkward loads is risky behavior. Always ask for help.
5. When lifting loads, you should use your leg muscles instead of your
 - a. Arms
 - b. Back. Your leg muscles are so much stronger than your back muscles. Be sure to use your leg muscles.
 - c. Legs
6. When standing, you should _____.
 - a. Keep your legs slightly bent/unlocked.
 - b. Maintain a neutral spine.
 - c. Wear comfortable shoes.
 - d. All of the above. Even simple tasks such as standing could have a huge impact on your health. Practice good habits to keep yourself healthy. Your family and your team are depending on you.
7. Poor technique can lead to pain in your low back, shoulder, and neck, and could create knee problems, to name a few, which can affect your quality of life.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Name: _____ Site: _____ Date: _____