

Warming Up

Introduction: “Construction is an athletic event” The importance of being warmed up prior to starting construction work (or any work involving heavy lifting) is just like getting ready for a sporting event. Stretching is a means to avoid the most common body sprain/strain injuries. Stretching before lifting is especially helpful to avoid back injuries. According to safety experts, over half of all workers’ compensation claims and costs were due to sprain/strains.

Guide for Discussion

Overexertion effects:

Backs; Trunks (Waist, Hips); Knees; Shoulders, Arms and Elbows

The hardest injury to live with is a back injury; once you are injured expect repeat injuries. One professional study indicates that once you do injure your back, you are five times more likely to suffer a re-injury.

Stretching: Brick masons working a major project (Intel Ronda Acres in Hillsboro, Or.) demonstrated that those who stretched before starting work didn’t have any back sprain/strain or lifting injuries.

Helpful Hints:

- Go into stretching with a relaxed and open mind.
- Stretch to the point where it is comfortable, not painful.
- Do not strain when you stretch – straining keeps the muscle from relaxing.
- Concentrate on the muscle being stretched – think about the good feeling of a proper stretch.
- As the feeling of the stretch changes to a mild stretch, stretch a little further, comfortable with no pain.
- Don’t bounce when you stretch. That can cause injuries.
- Always stretch to the tight side first.
- Breathe with a slow, normal rhythm. Do not hold your breath.

Additional Discussion Notes:

Demonstrate proper stretching exercises.

Remember: Construction is an athletic event. Stretching before you start work will make your job easier and helps prevent injuries on the job. Try it at home too.

