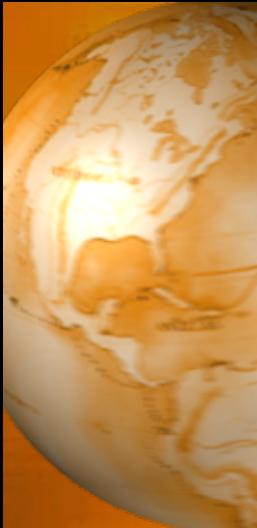


# Back Safety



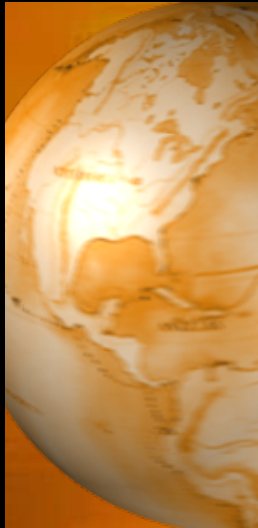
**Office of Environmental Safety & Health**



# Back Injuries: Sobering Facts



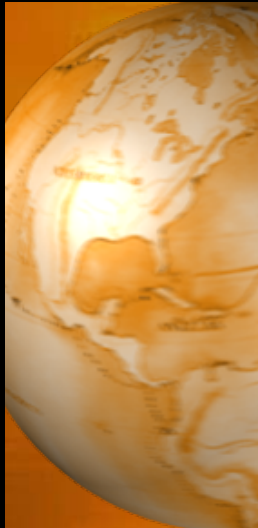
- *80-90% of the population will have back injury in their lifetimes*
- *One in every 5 workplace injuries is a back injury*
- *There are more than 1 million back injuries each year*
  - *Three out of 4 back injuries occur while lifting*



# Structure of the Back

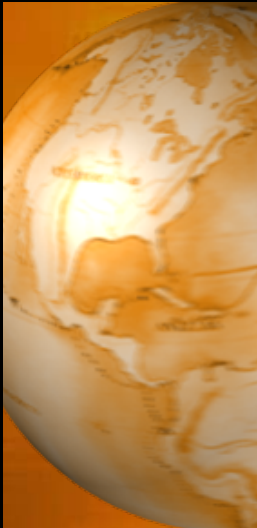


- *Vertebrae*
- *Discs*
- *Ligaments*
- *Muscles*
- *Tendons*
- *Nerves*



# Types of Injuries

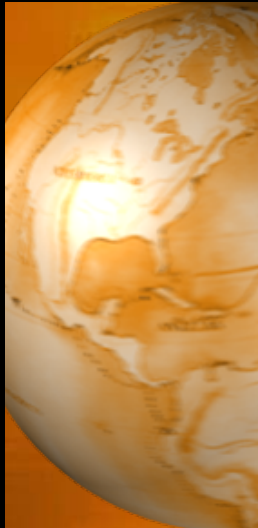
- *Strains and sprains to muscles and ligaments*
- *Muscle spasms*
- *Ruptured, herniated and slipped discs*
- *Degenerative discs*
- *Stress-related back pain*



# Common Causes of Back Injuries

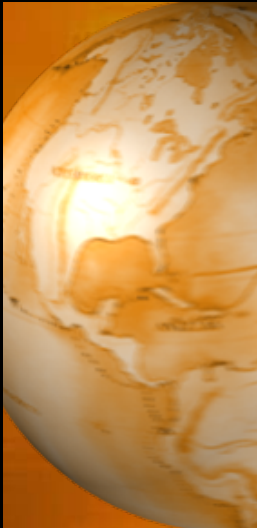


- *Lifting excessive weight*
- *Using improper lifting technique*
  - *Bending over at waist*
  - *Twisting with load*
  - *Reaching for elevated loads*
  - *Carrying or lifting awkwardly shaped objects*
- *Sitting, standing or working in one position too long*



# Contributing Factors

- *Poor physical condition*
- *Extra weight*
- *Poor posture*
- *Stress*



# Proper Lifting Procedures

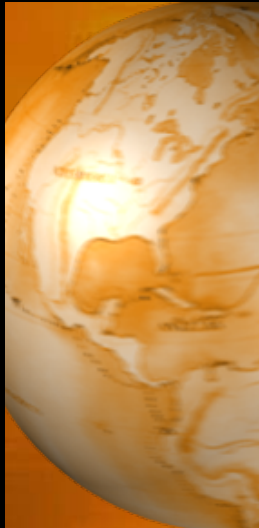
- *Plan the lift*
- *Test load before lifting*
- *Place feet shoulder-width apart close to object*
- *Bend the knees*
- *Get a secure grip*



# Proper Lifting Procedures (cont.'d)



- *Lift with legs, keeping back straight*
- *Lift evenly and slowly - no jerky motions*
- *Keep load as close to body as possible*

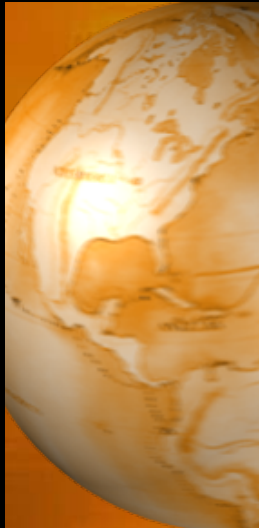




# Proper Lifting Procedures (cont'd)



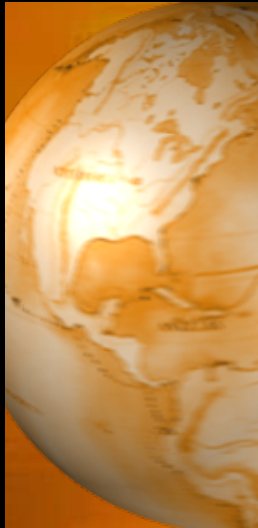
- *To change directions*
  - *Do not twist*
  - *Turn feet in direction of intended travel*
  - *Let body follow feet*
- *When moving with load*
  - *Keep it close to body*
  - *Watch for slip and fall hazards*
- *To set load down, follow steps in reverse*



# Other Stress Inducing Activities



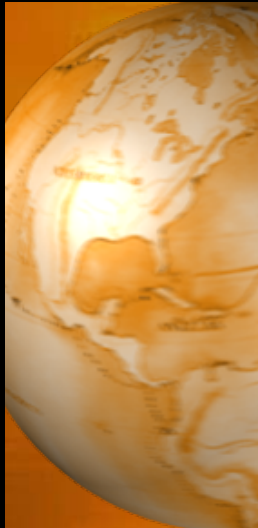
- *Prolonged sitting*
  - *Use good posture*
  - *Stretch frequently*
- *Pushing/pulling loads*
  - *Always push*
  - *Easier on back & gives more control*
- *Prolonged standing*
  - *Keep weight evenly balanced*
  - *Change foot positions*
- *Elevated loads*
  - *Use ladder*
  - *Load close to body*
  - *Back straight*



# Preventing Back Injuries



- *Avoid lifting and bending, whenever possible*
- *Use carts, dollies, forklifts*
- *Ask for help*
- *Elevate objects*



# Basic Back Care



- *Stretch before lifting*
- *Slow down during heavy, repetitive lifting*
- *Take rest breaks for your back*
- *Sleep on a firm mattress*
- *Get in shape*
- *Use good posture*



# If Back Pain Occurs



- *Rest and avoid activity that caused pain*
- *Use cold packs to relieve pain (initially)*
- *Use heat (after 48 hours)*
- *Use over-the-counter pain relievers*
- *Gradually begin gentle stretching*
- *Consult physician if:*
  - *Pain persists after resting for 72 hours*
  - *You have numbness or tingling in lower limbs*



# Key Take-Aways

- *Use proper lifting techniques*
- *Know motions to avoid*
- *Don't over do it - get help*
- *Help your back by caring for it*

