



Security Spotlight

An Informational Guide for Securitas Clients

Healthy lifestyle for a healthy back

Along with practicing proper body mechanics, lifestyle can play a major role in helping to reduce your risk of back injury. To help avoid back problems:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Stretch
- Exercise regularly
- Get enough rest (on a supportive mattress!)



Keep your back safe

Back injuries are a source of great pain for US companies and workers—physically and economically. According to OSHA, back strain due to overexertion represents one of the largest segments of employee injuries. Only the common cold accounts for more lost days of work.

Many workplace injuries might be avoided if employees were aware of ways to protect their backs—and put that awareness into practice. Technique, vigilance, and posture all play a role in preventing back injuries.

Back talk

The most common back problems result from strained or pulled muscles. Improper lifting technique is an obvious cause of back strain—but it's not the only one. OSHA and other experts suggest some simple strategies that can help prevent back strain and the resulting pain. These approaches can help protect your back and can be used whether you're lifting something on the job or away from work.

Use a good lifting technique.

Whether an object is heavy, large, or awkwardly shaped, the same basic principles for safe lifting apply.



Back pain is most common among people who are overweight or out of shape, especially weekend warriors who engage in vigorous activity after sitting around all week. And as you might guess, obesity puts stress on the back.

Medical experts report that lower back pain is a common concern, affecting up to 90% of Americans at some point in their lifetime. Moreover, once the back is damaged, it is more susceptible to repeated injury. Regular exercise can help prevent back problems and may also help prevent recurrence of back pain.



- Get close to the load before lifting.
- Face the item and separate your feet, putting one slightly in front of the other.
- Bend your knees and keep your back straight. Do not bend at the waist.
- Use your legs and thighs rather than your back for lifting.
- Lift the load straight up steadily.
- Keep the item centered and balanced and hold it close to you. The farther away you hold it from your body, the more stress is put on your back.
- Never lift or carry an item higher than your armpits or lower than your knees.
- Don't pivot, twist, or turn while lifting or carrying a load. Change direction with your feet, not your waist.
- Ask for assistance. Don't move or lift heavy loads by yourself.

Stay vigilant. While exaggerated movements or lifting heavy objects can cause back strain, other activities can also hurt your back or exacerbate an existing back problem. Simple tasks can bend your spine out of shape if your mind is on autopilot and your body isn't ready. Avoid awkward movements. Keep your back aligned when reaching for and picking up even small items, and maintain your focus, especially at the end of the day when fatigue can set in.

Maintain good posture. Sitting still for long stretches whether at work, in a car, or in front of a computer screen can put stress on your back. Maintain good posture when you sit. Keep your feet flat on the floor and support your lower back. Refrain from slouching or leaning forward. Stand up, stretch, or move around occasionally. Take breaks on long drives so you can stretch. Remove items from your back pocket, especially a wallet. Sitting on your wallet for long periods of time can put your spine out of alignment.

Stand tall. Good posture is important whether you're sitting or standing. Keep your spine properly aligned, your

head up and your stomach pulled in. Don't lean over a desk or table to work. If you are required to stand for long periods of time, change positions occasionally. Use rails or footrests to rest one foot at a time, if available. Wear appropriate footwear with flat or low heels.

No pain, no strain

The spine is not perfectly straight. It has three curves: one at the neck, one at the middle of the back, and one at the lower back. Keeping these three curves in their natural alignment is fundamental to keeping the back healthy. Protecting your back is a safety basic. Learn how to use your body correctly. Practice good body mechanics. And think about the moves you make before you make them.

Prevent back strain

Help prevent back strain by following back safety practices such as those outlined above. Taking care by maintaining a healthy lifestyle as well as using the suggested strategies at home and during recreational activities can help protect your back from strain and injury, keeping you on your feet and healthy.

