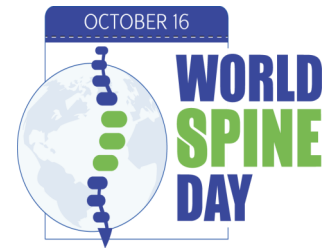


Your Back at Work: Physical Labourers and Agricultural Workers



Taking care of your spine at work

Lifting and Carrying

- Think before you lift: plan your route, clear obstacles and set-up a place to put down your load
- When possible, carry two smaller loads rather than one large load
- Squat or kneel down, do not bend to pick up an item; if the item is up higher than shoulder height then stand on a stool
- Keep the load close to your body, avoid twisting and lower the load slowly
- Use your legs for power and bend at the knees when lifting and lowering the load; avoid lifting with your back and upper body
- Take regular breaks and share the load when possible

Additional tips

- Push don't pull heavy items
- Keep your work close to you in order to avoid reaching or twisting
- Wear supportive/safety footwear and other protective equipment
- When standing, put one foot slightly in front of the other and/or rest on a small step with knees slightly bent
- Exercise regularly to maintain strength and endurance necessary for your job; consider warming up before beginning your work
- Keep a neutral posture: your spine has natural curves, try to maintain the curve in your lower back during all activities



Did you know?

- Back and neck pain is one of the most common reasons for workplace sick leave.
- Up to 80% of people will suffer from back or neck pain during their lives.
- 50% of the working population will experience back or neck pain symptoms at least once per year.
- Age is one of the most common risk factors for spinal pain, and the greatest effects of population ageing are predicted in low- and middle-income countries.

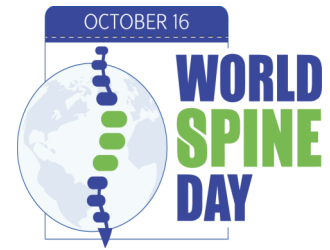


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Your Back at Work

Physical Labourers and Agricultural Workers



General Tips for a Healthy Spine

- **Sleep-** sleeping on your back or stomach can put additional strain on your back and neck; when sleeping on your back place a pillow under your knees and when on your side place a pillow between your knees
- **Healthy Diet and Exercise-** extra body weight can cause additional strain on your spine; try to stay within 10lbs of your ideal weight by eating a healthy, well-balanced diet and exercising regularly
- **Stop Smoking-** smokers have more back pain because chemicals in tobacco can reduce circulation and delay healing
- **Straighten Up and Move-** become more aware of your posture, take regular breaks to change positions and try the “Straighten Up and Move” exercises series to reduce strain on your spine
- **Consult a registered health care professional-** in your community to discuss these and other strategies to prevent and manage spinal disorders; spine experts may include chiropractors, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurses and medical doctors

When to seek help:

It is important to seek help as soon as you notice that something seems changed or different. Experts can help you to identify the source of the problem and provide treatment and advice for prevention and management.

If you experience any of the following then you should consider seeking immediate attention:

- Loss of bowel/bladder function
- Pain accompanied by dizziness, double vision, difficulty speaking or swallowing, difficulty walking or nausea
- After a trauma such as an accident, slip/fall, motor vehicle accident
- Loss of coordination and or clumsiness in extremities
- Pain that is severe, constant, getting worse or does not improve
- Pain that is worse at night and/or accompanied by night sweats
- Pain/numbness/tingling that goes into the arm or down the leg