

Toolbox Talk—Instructor Guide for Woodworkers

Handling and Lifting Topic Overview

Improper handling and lifting of heavy or bulky objects are a major source of back injuries. These injuries can affect your quality of life for weeks, months, or even years, preventing you from working or doing many things you enjoy. Lifting injuries are preventable.

Demonstration and **Discussion Topics**

- **Discuss** the types of objects in the shop that are heavy or awkward, and how each of those items could be handled safely.
- **Tour the shop** with the students, and point out these hazards.
- **Distribute** the student handout.
- **Review** the safety tips.
- **Discuss** how lifting and handling injuries can occur.
- **Explain** what can be done in the workplace to minimize the risk of injuries due to handling and lifting (e.g. storing heavy items between chest and knee levels, and storing things in smaller packages).
- Make it real. Tell at least two stories of injuries from your experience, or use the following examples:
 - An apprentice unloading plywood decided to carry a heavy load by their self instead of asking for help. They felt a sudden, shooting pain down one leg and were unable to continue work. They later required back surgery for a herniated disk.
 - A young worker unloading parts decided to carry several heavy cartons instead of using a dolly. They felt a sudden shooting pain down one leg and were unable to continue work. They later required back surgery for a herniated disk.

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"These injuries can affect your" quality of life for weeks, months, or even years, preventing you from working or doing many things you enjoy."

- Discuss the attitude that "it won't happen to me". Remind them that an injury can and will happen if they take shortcuts or are careless.
- Instruct students to identify and report any safety concerns about lifting or handling items.
- Encourage them to **ASK** questions.
- Answer any questions or concerns they might have.
- Set a good example by working safely at all times.

Resources

- Back Talk: An Owner's Manual for Backs www.worksafebc.com/publications/health and safety/by topic/assets/pdf/back talk.pdf
- Does your back hurt? A guide to preventing low back pain www.worksafebc.com/publications/health and safety/by topic/assets/pdf/does your back hurt.pdf
- **Ergonomics Commentary 1 Back Belts** www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/backbelts.pdf
- □ Lift/Lower Calculator www2.worksafebc.com/calculator/llc/default.htm

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