

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Give Back Strains & Sprains the Slip



Nationally, agriculture ranks second behind mining and construction in frequency and number of accidents. Sprains and strains are one of the leading causes in the agriculture category.

## **DISTINCTION BETWEEN SPRAINS & STRAINS:**

- **Sprain** - A sprain is the result of stretching or tearing ligaments. Ligaments are little bands of fibrous tissue that connect one bone to another. They assist in stabilizing joints by preventing excessive movement. Sprains are usually caused by rapid changes in direction or by a collision. The most common locations for sprains are the knees, ankles, and wrists.
- **Strain** - A strain is the result of stretching or tearing a muscle. This type of injury often occurs when muscles suddenly and powerfully contract----or when a muscle stretches unusually far. This is called an acute strain. Overuse of certain muscles over periods of time can lead to a chronic strain. Another by-name or nickname for muscle strains are sometimes called:"pulled" muscles. Hamstring and back injuries are among the most common strains.

Treatment for both strains and sprains depends on the severity of the injury. Sometimes self-help measures and over-the-counter medications are all that is required.

Lower back pain results in strains much of the time. Lower back injuries are one of the most common work injuries, and it is also one of the easiest to prevent. Lower back injuries will affect half of the nation's work force sometime during their working life.

Some folks think that they are in a job that isn't prone to back injuries. Most any job that requires some lifting puts you at a risk. However, you can take precautions to prevent a back strain if you are careful of what you are doing and remain cognizant of the threat of a back strain.

## **CAN YOU REALLY LIFT IT?**

- Make sure that the load isn't too heavy. Don't try to be a hero or "macho man." Statistics show that only 10% of the women can lift more than 47 lbs - most women should only lift no more than 28 lbs. Ten percent of male industrial workers can lift 70 lbs. safely - most men should only lift a max of 37 lbs.
- Be careful that you don't lift so high that you lose control of your load.
- Check the distance that you have to carry the load. Exertion and a strain can come from an overload at a distance too far to carry with a buggy or gurney.

- Question if the job requires constant manual lifting.

## **LIFT IT RIGHT:**

If a load weighs more than 25 lbs., follow the recommended steps below for lifting:

- Position your feet properly. Put one foot next to the load and the other behind it.
- Squat down, keeping your head erect and your back straight.
- Use your full hand to grip the load. Using your fingers alone is too weak to grip.
- Bring the load close to your body and keep your elbows and arms close to your body. Center your body weight over your feet and start to lift with a thrust of your leg.

## **GET IN SHAPE:**

If your job is going to require a lot of lifting, you need to start a fitness-conditioning program.

- Stretch exercises are important because they help prevent injuries that come from jerking of muscles that are too tight.
- Running, swimming, aerobics, and weight lifting are good because they increase your stamina and strength.

## **IF YOU DO GET HURT:**

If you happen to get a little twinge in your back, don't panic! Most back injuries involve a sprain or strain, and the damage is only temporary. Following are some tips to help you take care of yourself:

- Give your injury time to heal. Don't overdo the rest, or you'll get out of shape. If the pain persists, then see a doctor.
- Go back to work as soon as possible. Avoid extreme lifting until you are ready to resume your full workload.
- Talk to your supervisor about working on a program for a temporary time that will limit your lifting until you are at full speed again. This limited schedule will show good faith on your part that you are serious about your work, but at the same time will enable you to return to work with a light schedule and enable you to return with light loads and gradually work back into your full scale work load.

According to Mayo's Clinic the main factors contributing to strains and sprains are:

- **Poor Conditioning** - Lack of conditioning can leave your muscles weak, making the chance of an injury more sustainable.
- **Poor Technique** - This is pretty much self-explanatory. Lifting incorrectly or having your body parts in the wrong position can result in a strain or sprain.
- **Fatigue** - Tired muscles are less likely to support your joints. When you are tired, you are more likely to give in to the forces that could cause stress on a joint or overextend a muscle.

**EVERY SAFE DAY KEEPS  
THE DOCTOR AWAY!!**