

# MAFES Dawg Tracks

March 14, 2016



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Safety Tips:  
Safe Lifting at Work and  
At Home*

I recently read that in our lifetime that we shall experience a back injury. Some more intense than others.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that every year 1 million workers suffer back injuries. They also stated that back injuries account for one out of every five workplace injuries or illnesses.

Following are some steps that we can take to decrease the chances of an injury, if they are followed:

## AVOIDING BACK INJURIES-

- Unless we have chronic back injuries, most of us who are healthy don't think much about the importance of our backs.
- All it takes, though, is a torn ligament or serious strain and we know just how painful a back injury can be.
- Back injuries can result in lost work time, costly medical bills, and difficulty in performing day-to-day tasks both at work and at home.
- One good way to avoid a back injury is to practice correct lifting procedures.
- This is important whether you are lifting large pots, boxes, tools, lumber or other items at work, or whether you are lifting a laundry tub filled with wet clothes, heavy grocery bags or a child at home.
- Sometimes even twisting to reach into the back seat of your vehicle can result in a back problem.
- Remember that serious back problems can last a lifetime.

## COMMON REASONS FOR BACK INJURIES-

- ✓ Did you know that for each pound of weight you lift puts close to 7.5 lbs. of pressure on your lower back?
- ✓ That's important so that you aren't tempted to lift something by yourself that requires extra help.
- ✓ Other common reasons that back injuries occur:
  - ~ Person is overtired, ill or in too much of a hurry.
  - ~ Person is overweight or otherwise in poor physical shape.
  - ~ Lifting objects higher than chest height.
  - ~ Person twists the body when lifting or carrying objects.
  - ~ Back isn't kept straight when lifting.
  - ~ Person bends at the waist to pick up or set down an object.
- ✓ Remember- always ask for help if an object is bulky or too heavy to handle by yourself.

## SAFE LIFTING TIPS-

- Bend your knees – **do not** bend from the waist – when picking up and setting down objects.
- Keep your back as straight as possible at all times.
- Get a firm footing before picking up a heavy object. Be sure your shoes or boots have good traction. Then- part your feet- put one foot slightly in front of the other. This will help you maintain good balance.
- Keep your object that you're carrying close to your body. Don't let the object bounce around.
- Don't twist your body when carrying a heavy object.
- Don't lift any object higher than your chest.
- If an object is out of reach, change your position or location or pull the object out toward you so it is safer and easier to reach.

## OTHER SAFETY TIPS-

- Plan ahead. Make sure your path is clear, that you have a clear line of vision and that you'll have a clear place to set the object down.
- Check for wet spots or an otherwise slippery floor or ground and anything else that could cause you to slip and fall.
- Use sturdy ladders or safe platforms.
- If you use a back brace, be sure to check the recommended procedures.
- Don't push or pull too heavy of a load.
- Make sure you have a firm grip on the object you are lifting. Grip gloves are often very helpful.
- Choose lightweight tools that will still do the job, such as lightweight rakes and shovels at home. These are less likely to cause strain on your back.
- Avoid prolonged heavy lifting. Take scheduled breaks to give your back a chance to rest.
- Don't be in a hurry or become distracted when you are lifting.
- Use both hands with a tight grip when carrying a heavy object.
- Check your company's or station rules for weight restrictions.

Following these tips will assure you that your chances of a back injury will decrease.

**AT WORK & AT HOME  
LET SAFETY BE KNOWN  
BE A LEADER-  
FOLLOW SAFETY PROCEDURES**