

Your Back at Work: Physical Labourers and Agricultural Workers



Take care of your spine at work!

Lifting and Carrying

- Think before you lift: how heavy is the weight? How far do you need to carry it? Are there any obstacles?
- Can you divide the weight into smaller parts?
- Use your thigh muscles to lift; keep your back straight.
- Keep the load close to your body, avoid twisting and lower the load slowly
- Avoid lifting with your back and upper body; don't bend and reach when lifting
- Take regular breaks and share the load when possible

Additional tips

- With heavy items, push don't pull!
- Avoid reaching and twisting
- Wear appropriate footwear and other protective equipment such as gloves when lifting
- When lifting while standing, put one foot slightly in front of the other
- 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.
- Heavy manual work is one of the most common risk factors for spinal pain.
- Back pain is most prevalent in low and middle income countries

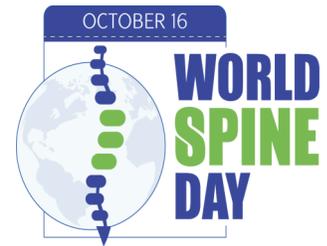


WWW.WORLDSPINEDAY.ORG

[@World_Spine_Day](https://twitter.com/World_Spine_Day)

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” exercise series to reduce strain on your spine
- **Consult a registered health care professional-** 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