



Warming up

Many public service jobs require physical labor. A warm up before work (or any work involving heavy lifting) is just as important as a warm-up before sports. Stretching is an effective way to prevent most common body sprain or strain injuries. Stretching before lifting is especially helpful to avoid back injuries. According to safety experts, over half of all Workers' Compensation claims and costs were due to sprain/strains.

Guide for Discussion

Overexertion Effects on Backs, Torso (Waist, Hips), Knees, Shoulders, Arms and Elbows:

The hardest injury to live with is a back injury. One professional study indicates that once you do injure your back, you are five times more likely to suffer a re-injury. Stretching has been demonstrated to significantly reduce the number of sprains and strains that occur on the job.

Helpful Hints:

- Begin stretches with a relaxed and open mind.
- Stretch to the point where it is comfortable, not painful.
- Do not strain when you stretch—straining keeps the muscle from relaxing.
- Concentrate on the muscle being stretched—think about the good feeling of a proper stretch.
- As the intensity of the stretch increases, stretch a little farther while remaining comfortable without pain.
- Don't bounce when you stretch. That can cause injuries.
- Always stretch to the tight side first.
- Breathe with a slow, normal rhythm. Do not hold your breath.

Additional Discussion Notes Demonstrate proper stretching exercises. For more in-depth training on this subject, attend CIRMA's *Preventing Sprains & Strains* Workshop.

Remember Stretching before you start work will make your job easier and helps prevent injuries on the job. Try it at home, too.

Attendees _____