



## Warming Up

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“Construction is an athletic event.” The importance of being warmed up prior to starting construction work (or any work involving heavy lifting) is just like getting ready for a sporting event. Stretching is a means to avoid the most common body sprain/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: Backs; Trunks (Waist, Hips); Knees; Shoulders, Arms and Elbows

The hardest injury to live with is a back injury; once you are injured expect repeat injuries. One professional study indicates that once you do injure your back, you are five times more likely to suffer a re-injury.

Stretching: Brick masons working a major project (Intel Ronda Acres in Hillsboro, OR) demonstrated that those who stretched before starting work didn’t have any back sprain/strain or lifting injuries.

### Helpful Hints:

- Go into stretching 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 feeling of the stretch changes to a mild stretch, stretch a little further, comfortable with no 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.

Remember: Construction is an athletic event. Stretching before you start work will make your job easier and helps prevent injuries on the job. Try it at home too.

NOTE: Always promote a discussion of any of the topics covered in the Tool Box Talks. Should any question arise that you cannot answer, don’t hesitate to contact your Employer.