[IMAGE]

Workplace Lifting: Watch Out for Spine Injuries

Most occupations involve some form of lifting, whether it's moving files, carrying boxes, or stacking items on a shelf. Spinal loading can occur unpredictably, such as when lunging to catch a falling object or slipping while carrying a heavy weight, especially in high-risk occupations that require consistent heavy lifting (i.e., working in a warehouse or on a construction site). These unpredictable lifting situations can contribute to accidents and resulting injury.

How does workplace lifting impact the spine? In a recent study, 12 volunteers each stood on a force plate while weights (0, 2, 4, and 6 kilograms for men, 40% less for women) were delivered into their hands in one of three ways: dropped into a box with handles, held by the subject; dropped into a box with handles, held while blindfolded and wearing headphones; and pushed off a smooth table. All tests were performed with volunteers in upright, partially flexed, and moderately flexed postures.

Results showed that compressive forces acting on the spine increased dramatically under all conditions, particularly when loads were suddenly and unexpected dropped into a box held by the subject. The authors conclude that "sudden and alarming events associated with manual handling cause a reflex overreaction of the back muscles…" and suggest that greater emphasis on injury prevention should be considered.

Here's something else to consider: making an appointment with a doctor of chiropractic. Get the facts on how to minimize injury, on the job and at home, and learn more on how to keep your back (and the rest of your body) healthy.

Reference:

Mannion AF, Adams MA, Dolan P. Sudden and unexpected loading generates high forces on the lumbar spine. *Spine*, April 1, 2000: Vol. 25, No. 7, pp842-52.

For more information on back pain, go to http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/backpain.html

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