

SET YOUR SIGHTS ON SAFETY AT WORK

If not performed safely and correctly, work-related tasks may lead to injury, as well as stress, strain, and disorders ranging in severity from mild discomfort to chronic and debilitating conditions. In fact, the National Safety Council reports that 4.3 million workers suffered injuries and illnesses in 2004. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to prevent accidents and injury and to maximize your safety at work.

LIFT SAFELY TO PREVENT BACK INJURIES

Research indicates that back injuries are the number one cause of workplace injuries, and that over half of back injuries are due to improper lifting. When possible, use equipment for lifting. Otherwise, consider the following suggestions.

- Keep objects close to your body and lift with your legs rather than with your back.
- Ensure that your footing is solid, and if you must turn, do so by turning your feet rather than by twisting your back.
- Do not lift heavy or unbalanced loads.
- Before lifting a heavy load, tip it to its side to determine whether you can carry it comfortably. If not, ask for help.

MAINTAIN PROPER BODY POSITION WHEN WORKING WITH A COMPUTER

Every day in the United States, millions of people work with computers while seated at desks. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, working with the body in a neutral position reduces strain on the muscles, tendons, and skeletal system and reduces your risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder. Here are some suggestions for maintaining a neutral position while sitting at a desk.

- Allow shoulders to relax and hang normally at your sides.
- Keep elbows bent and close to the body, and keep hands, wrists, and forearms straight and parallel to the floor.
- Thighs and hips should also be parallel to the floor, and knees should be at the same height as the hips.
- Make sure that either the floor or a footrest supports your feet.

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BEAT THE HEAT

Summer is right around the corner, and with it comes the potential for extremely hot weather in many areas of the country. For this reason, it is important to be aware of the signs

of heat-related illness. Generally, the body will keep itself cool by allowing heat to escape through

the skin and by perspiring. If the body fails to cool itself or does not cool itself quickly enough, a heat-related illness can occur. Although anyone can experience heat-related illness, young children and the elderly are at increased risk. Left untreated, heat-related illness can lead to serious consequences including death.

THE STAGES OF HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

Generally, heat-related illness happens in stages, each stage progressively more serious than the last. The first stage, heat

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MAKE A MOVE!

Even those individuals with excellent posture need to move throughout the day. It is not good for you to work in the same position for prolonged periods. Take breaks and walk around regularly, and take a few extra minutes to stretch your arms, shoulders, hands, and fingers.

PREVENT EYE STRAIN AND INJURY

Wearing appropriate eye protection for the task at hand is the most effective measure you can take to protect your eyes from foreign matter, equipment, and other potential hazards. In addition, consider the following recommendations.

- Focusing on a computer display terminal for an extended period can lead to eye fatigue and headaches. Give your eyes a break periodically.
- Be aware that contact lenses do not protect the eyes. Wear goggles or other eye protection equipment over contact lenses.
- In the event of a chemical splash, wash the eyes with clean water for 20 minutes and seek medical attention immediately.

If you experience pain or injury, consult a physician for diagnosis and treatment options.

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cramps, is characterized by heat cramps in the muscles, most likely caused by the loss of water and salt associated with heavy sweating and exertion. Often, heat cramps afflict the legs or abdominal muscles.

The next, more serious, stage is heat exhaustion. Heat exhaustion usually occurs when individuals lose fluids due to heavy sweating as a result of heavy exercise or working in a very warm and humid environment. Loss of fluid decreases the blood flow to vital organs which causes the body to enter a form of shock. The body does not cool itself adequately because sweat does not evaporate, most likely due to high humidity or too much clothing. Signs of heat exhaustion include:

- Cool, moist, pale, flushed or red skin
- heavy sweating

- headache
- nausea or vomiting
- dizziness
- exhaustion

Late stage heat related illness is called heat stroke or sunstroke and is life-threatening. According to the American Red Cross, the victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly. Signs of heat stroke include:

- Hot, red and dry skin
- Changes in consciousness
- Rapid, weak pulse
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Vomiting
- High body temperature (as high as 105 degrees)

TREATMENT

In general, treatment of heat-related illness consists of three steps: cool the body, hydrate the body, and minimize shock. For heat cramps or heat exhaustion, move the person out of the sun and heat, and give him or her a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. If the person declines water, vomits, or loses consciousness, call 911 immediately. Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency. If someone is exhibiting symptoms of heat stroke, call 911. Move him or her out of the sun and heat and quickly cool the body.

PREVENT HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

The best way to avoid the potentially dangerous consequences of heat-related illness is to stay safe in the heat. Consider the following tips from the American Red Cross.

- In hot weather, wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Drink plenty of water. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
- Eat small meals and eat more often.
- Avoid salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Slow down and avoid strenuous activity.
- Take regular breaks when engaged in physical activity on warm days.

If you or someone else is experiencing signs of heat stroke, seek immediate medical attention.

St. Luke's Healthy Living Classes and Programs

Conversations for Women: Share the Spirit

Saturday, April 26

Registration: 8:30 a.m.

Program: 9:30 to Noon

St. Luke's Institute for Health
Education

Spend the Morning with America's Favorite T.V. Mom, Florence Henderson! A panel with St. Luke's Hospital specialists discussing the latest in women's health information will help you become proactive in a healthy lifestyle.

Call 314-542-4848 or visit
www.stlukes-stl.com to register

Maternity Classes Happiest Baby on the Block™

Sleep-deprived new parents looking for restful nights are encouraged to learn this extraordinary approach to calm your baby.

Fast Track Childbirth Class

Class focuses on providing knowledge and understanding of the birthing process for parents who are unable to attend a regular four-week session.

Mommies in Motion

An exercise program designed to address the fitness needs of pregnant women, combining stretching, strengthening, and light aerobics in a comfortable and supportive environment.

For more information about these and other maternity classes and fees, or to schedule a tour of the Birth Care Suites, call 314-205-6906.



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