

MIDWESTERN INSURANCE ALLIANCE

Loss Control Newsletter

May 1997



Midwestern Insurance Alliance maintains the goal of providing our insureds with a wide range of loss control services. Only one of which is this monthly *Loss Control Newsletter*. To become aware of the many other services offered, contact Loss Control Manager, Keith Wertz at (502) 429-9990 or send e-mail to krwertz@midwesterninsurance.com

What are You Doing to Prevent Back Injuries ? (PART 2)

Review of Part 1

Last month's Loss Control Newsletter touched upon the significant impact of back injuries, the causes of back injuries, and who is at risk. Additionally, Part 1 of this three-part series provided some guidelines for material handling and preventing back injuries among sedentary workers. Furthermore, last month's Loss Control Newsletter urged employers to evaluate their current effort toward reducing the incidence of back injuries.

This newsletter focuses upon physical conditioning as an element of an effective back injury prevention program.

Physical Conditioning

As addressed in last month's Loss Control Newsletter, proper physical conditioning helps to prevent back injuries.

Unfortunately, many people have weak back and abdominal muscles. Although there is no way to strengthen the bones or discs in our backs, we can all do some basic exercises to tone and strengthen our muscles.

Gaining the Willing Cooperation of Employees

Perhaps you are of the belief that physical conditioning of your employees would be beneficial in reducing the potential for back injuries, but you just can't see them actually doing the exercises.

Admittedly, if you are asking employees to do something different, they will likely be reluctant to accept it. Remember, it must be presented to employees in a manner which will solicit their willing cooperation. Be patient... it may take time to alter their perception of what is "normal."

Stretching

Prepare yourself for exercising by stretching slowly, Stretching will also increase your flexibility gradually, and is effective in relieving tension from heavy lifting or repetitive work.

Stretches should be performed slowly and steadily, and should be held for at least 20 to 30 seconds. Avoid bouncing while stretching.

While stretching, you should feel a mild tension that will go away as you hold the stretch. Don't stretch to the point of pain

Stretching and Strengthening Exercises

The following are just a few of the many possible simple, relaxing stretching and strengthening exercises for your back and neck. None need special equipment.

Exercises Done While Lying on the Floor

Lying on the floor with your knees bent out to the side, put the soles of your feet together. The pull of gravity will stretch the inner thighs.

Lie on the floor with your knees bent and your fingers interlaced behind your head (not your neck). Using your arms, pull your head slowly forward until you feel a mild stretch in the back of your neck.

Lying on the floor with your knees bent, place your arms out in front of you. With the back of your head on the floor, turn your chin toward your shoulder, keeping your head on the floor. You need only feel a mild stretch

Lying on the floor, use your arms to pull your right leg toward your chest. You should feel a mild tension. Try not to strain, and be sure to keep your lower back flat.

Then switch and do the same with your left leg.

To strengthen your abdomen, lie on the floor with your knees slightly bent. Place your hands out in front of you and slowly curl up partly toward your knees until you feel tension in your stomach muscles. Hold for a count of 5 seconds, and slowly relax flat again. Repeat this 5 to 25 times.

Exercises Done While Standing-Up

Stand-up against the wall and press the small of your back flat against the wall. Slowly slide down the wall until your legs are partly bent. Hold the position for a count of ten, and then return upright again.

Stand against the wall and place the small of your back against the wall, tightening your buttocks and stomach muscles at the same time. Hold the position for a count of 10

seconds, concentrating on holding the muscles tight. Repeat this 5 to 25 times. This exercise can also be done while lying on the floor.

Help is Available

If your time and/or knowledge is limited to the point that you cannot afford back injury prevention the attention it deserves; or if you would feel more comfortable having a trained professional training your employees, you will be well advised to contact your local American Red Cross and inquire about their back injury prevention program. The cost is nominal (approximately \$15 per person), and the training addresses back injury prevention from several angles (lifting techniques, physical conditioning, etc.)

WORKER'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE IN KENTUCKY

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Worker's Comp Insurance in Kentucky.**

**Midwestern Insurance Alliance is eliminating your
workers' comp risk by introducing a fully-insured product.
This program features local underwriting, local
management, and great low rates!**