Sore Back - Aching Feet

What Is a Bulging Disc?

Between each of the 24 bones (vertebrae) that make up the spine is a spongy, gel-filled pad called an intervertebral disc that functions as a shock absorber by preventing the bones from rubbing against each other. Due to injury, disease or aging, a disc can become inflamed or deteriorate and slip out of place (known as bulging or herniated), sometimes even leaking some of its inner material.

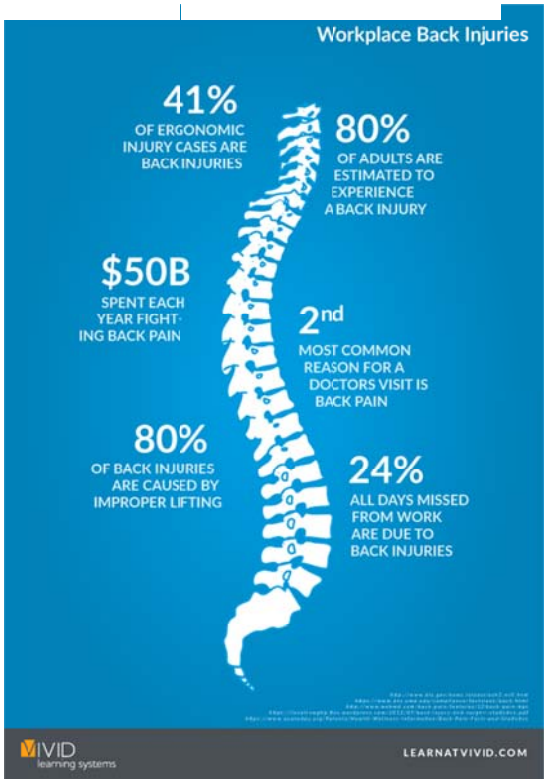
Bulging discs are very common and often have no symptoms, but when they push on the spinal cord or an adjacent nerve, they can cause pain, numbness and weakness. Bulging discs can occur anywhere on the spine but are most common in the lower back. They don't always heal, but with treatment, including a low-impact exercise routine that incorporates stretching and building up core muscles, they can be managed.

12 Tips for Preventing Back Injuries

25% of construction injuries are back injuries, so it's worth planning, equipping and staffing sites to preserve back health

The Center for Construction Research and Training says the construction industry has the highest incident rate of back injuries of any industry except transportation. Of all the construction-related injuries that occur each year, 25% of them are back injuries.

Every year, a back injury causes 1 in 100 construction workers to miss work — usually missing about seven workdays, but sometimes more than 30. Most back problems are low-back injuries. Repeated injury to your back can cause permanent damage and end your career.

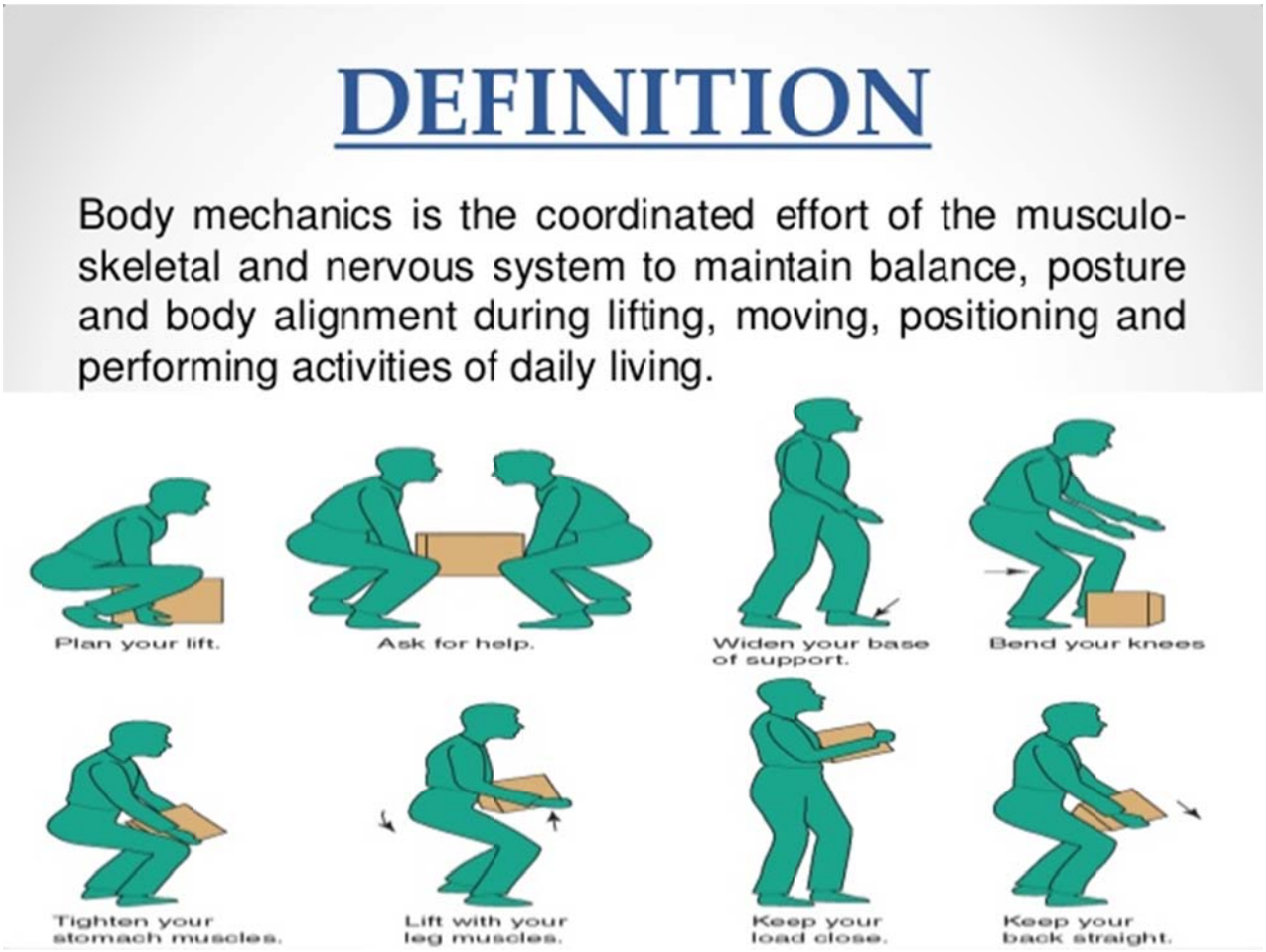


Most back injuries are sprains and strains from lifting, lowering, carrying, pushing, and pulling materials. You are at higher risk of low-back injury if you often carry heavy loads, must twist while carrying heavy loads, or work a lot while bent over or in other awkward postures.

Injuries can be reduced by planning, changing how work is done, and training workers and supervisors.

Plan

- Cut down on carrying. Have materials delivered close to where they will be used.
- Store materials at waist height whenever possible.
- Raise your work to waist level, if you can. Pipefitters use pipe stands. Masons have adjustable scaffolds to keep the work at waist height.
- Make sure floors and walkways are clear and dry. Slips and trips are a big cause of back injuries.
- Take rest breaks. When you are tired, you are more prone to injury.



Get Help

- Use carts, dollies, forklifts, and hoists to move materials — not your back.
- Use carrying tools with handles to get a good grip on wallboard or other odd-shaped loads.
- If materials weigh more than about 50 pounds, do not lift them by yourself. Get help from another worker or use a cart.

Move Carefully

- When lifting or carrying materials, keep the load as close to your body as you can.
- Try not to twist, when lifting and lowering materials. Turn your whole body instead.
- Lift and lower materials in a smooth steady way. Try not to jerk the lift.
- When you pick up materials off the ground, try supporting yourself by leaning on something while lifting. Don't bend over; instead, kneel on one knee and pull the load up on to your knee before standing. (Wear knee pads when you kneel.)
- The occurrence of on-the-job foot injuries is as common in industry as they are preventable. When a job requires a worker to stand on his feet for long periods of time and work in potentially hazardous areas or with potentially hazardous materials, there will be some risk of foot injury. With the proper foot protection and training, a significant number of injuries and lost workday accidents could be prevented.

Foot Injury Statistics

Statistics tell the story of the importance of preventing foot injuries:

* According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 60,000 foot injuries per year result in lost work days.
* BLS cites a study of foot injuries that found 75 percent of the injuries occurred when workers were not in compliance.
* According to the National Council on Compensation Insurance, the average cost of a lost work day foot injury is $9,600.
* Eighty percent of all footwear injuries are caused by an object weighing no more than 30 pounds impacting the foot.

Hazards and Protections

Several hazards are common in the workplace today. However, the probability of an injury occurring can be greatly minimized or eliminated with a structured training program and proper foot protection designed specifically for those workplace environments. Listed below are some of the common workplace hazards and what can be done to prevent them:

* *Falling and rolling objects, cuts and punctures*. Injuries could include crushed or broken feet, amputations of toes or feet, punctures of feet or toes.
Protection: Steel or composite toe safety footwear, metatarsal guards, puncture-resistant footwear. Shoes should be ASTM F2413-05 compliant.

* *Chemicals, solvents.* Injuries could include chemical burns, skin irritation, and exposure.
Protection: Leather safety footwear with synthetic stitching, Rubber, vinyl, plastic, or PVC compound boots or overshoes.

* *Electrical current, high voltage.* Injuries could include electrical shocks or fatal electrical exposure.
Protection: Safety footwear should incorporate an electrical hazard (EH) protective sole and heel. The sole construction should be designed to reduce hazards from contact with electrically energized parts. It also should provide a secondary electrical hazard protection on substantially insulated surfaces. Footwear should be designed to provide protection from open circuits of 600 volts or less under dry conditions. Properties should include the ability to withstand 14,000 volts (rms) at 60Hz for one minute with no leakage in excess of 3.0 milliamperes.

* *Extreme cold.* Injuries could include frostbite and permanent tissue damage or loss, as well as causing discomfort.
Protection: Insulated footwear that captures the body's heat, preventing it from escaping; footwear that is waterproof/water resistant, which will prevent feet from getting wet, thereby facilitating keeping feet warm.

* *Slips, trips and falls.* Injuries include falls, back sprains, ankle sprains, and disabling injuries.
Protection: Safety shoes with soles that are non-slip rubber, urethane, or crepe; footwear that wraps around and laces tight around the ankle to prevent sprains and twisting.

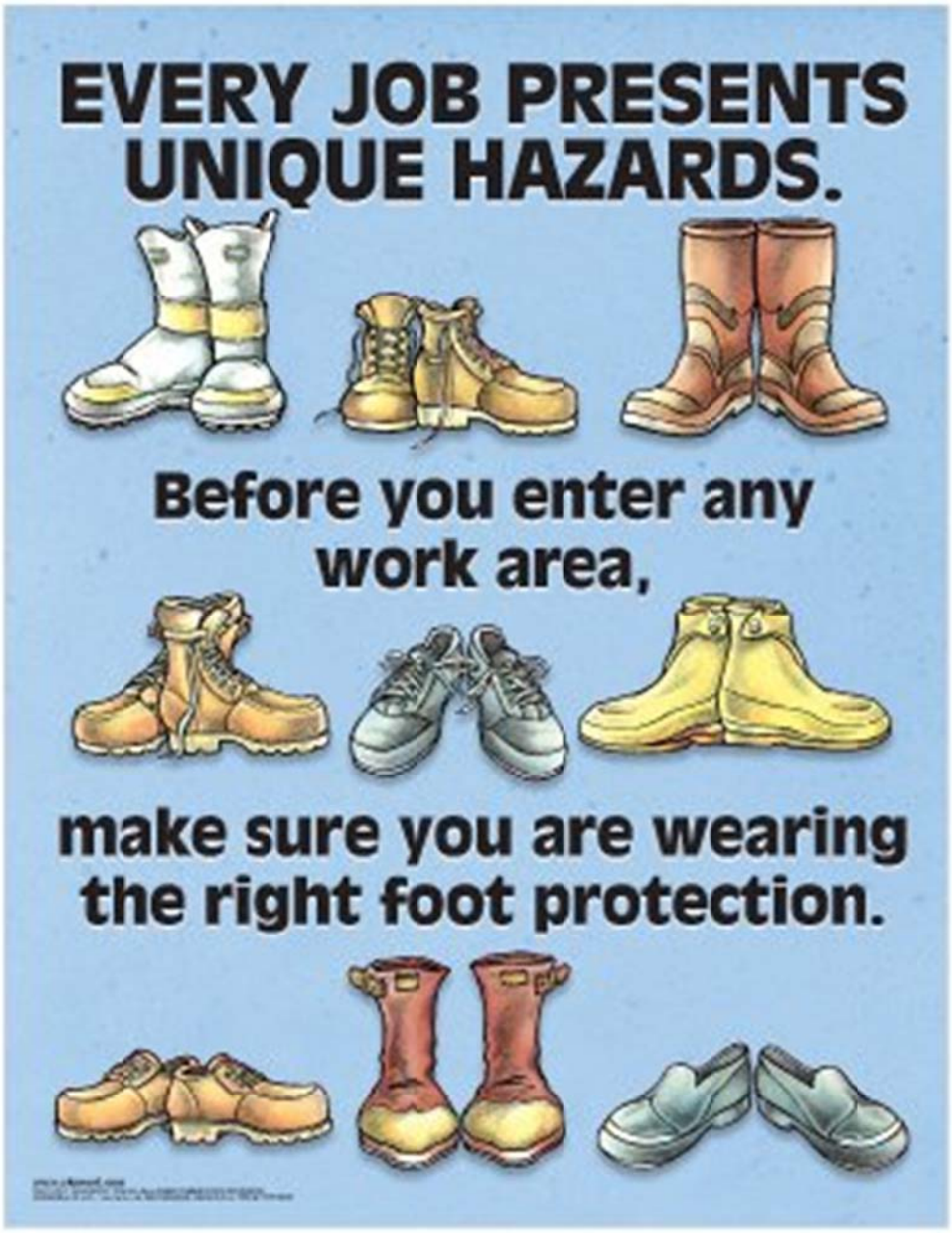
* *Wet environments.* Injuries could include slips and falls, back sprains, ankle sprains, strains, and disabling injuries.
Protection: Lined rubber boots with waterproof characteristics; safety shoes with soles that are non-slip rubber, urethane, or crepe.

Footwear Safety Programs

Today, many companies offer their employees safety footwear through company-sponsored purchasing programs. Offering such a program is a great way to help ensure employee safety and assist employees in choosing the correct footwear for the job.

Several footwear companies offer a variety of safety footwear purchase programs. Most offer relatively similar products and services (i.e., retail outlets, on-site mobile distribution, in-house commissary stores, and direct-to-industry mail order programs). In selecting a program, you want to make sure your company's particular needs are addressed.

Proper safety footwear alone will not prevent all accidents. You should develop a safety footwear program that incorporates both footwear selection and proper use and maintenance of that footwear. This process is usually preceded by performing a hazard assessment of the workplace. The hazard assessment, in conjunction with the footwear selection and training process, helps to ensure that hazards are minimized and employees are in compliance with the employer's policies.


EVERY JOB PRESENTS UNIQUE HAZARDS.
Before you enter any work area,
make sure you are wearing the right foot protection.