Safety Trainer — Preventing Overexertion

7 MINUTE

GOALS

This safety session teaches employees to:

- Identify causes of overexertion.
- Take proper precautions to prevent overexertion injuries.

Applicable Regulations: None

1. Overexertion has many causes and can result in painful injuries.

- Overexertion contributes to musculoskeletal or soft-tissue injuries to muscles, tendons, and ligaments.
- Trying to lift or carry a weight that is too heavy for you is one of the most common causes of overexertion.
- Straining to push or pull a load is another form of overexertion and can also lead to injury.
- Frequent bending, reaching, and stretching put extra strain on muscles and can lead to overexertion.
- Working in an awkward posture for long periods also puts unusual stress on the body and can result in injuries and pain.
- Using excessive force when working is another way you can overexert and risk injury.

2. Several factors contribute to the risk of overexertion injuries.

- You are at greater risk of overexertion injuries if you are out of shape.
  — Toned muscles and a flexible body decrease the risk of overexertion.
- Being overweight also increases the risk of overexertion injuries.
  — When you carry extra pounds, your body has to work harder and that can result in injuries.
- Poor posture can also put extra stress on the body and result in overexertion and injury.
- Age is also a factor that contributes to overexertion injuries, and as a result, older workers are at greater risk of overexerting and injuring themselves than younger ones.

3. Injuries resulting from overexertion are common.

- Overexertion is a leading cause of workplace injuries, including:
  — Back injuries
  — Sprains and strains to other parts of the body, including shoulders, neck, joints.
- Signs of overexertion injuries include:
  — Pain or stiffness in the back or neck
  — Pain, stiffness, or loss of mobility in the shoulders
  — Pain or numbness in the arms or legs
  — Pain, swelling, or stiffness in elbow or knee joints
  — Pain, swelling, or numbness in hands or wrists.
- Injuries caused by overexertion often take days or weeks to heal, and some can be disabling.

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4. Safe lifting and carrying can reduce overexertion and prevent injuries.

- When you lift:
    - Face the load with your feet shoulder-width apart.
    - Keep your heels down and turn your feet slightly out.
    - Squat by bending at the hips and knees.
    - Use your leg and stomach muscles to power the lift.
    - Maintain your back's natural curves as you lift by keeping your head up.
- When you carry:
    - Point your feet in the direction of your move.
    - Take small steps to turn your body as a single unit; don't twist.
    - Hug the load, walk at a steady pace, and rest when you need to.

5. Maintaining a neutral posture while working helps minimize the risk of overexertion.

- Keep your head straight and face forward while you work.

- Maintain your back's natural curves, avoiding slouching.

- Keep arms hanging comfortably at your side, shoulders not hunched, and elbows close to your sides.

- Keep wrists in a straight line with forearms.

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your weight balanced.

6. Other safe work habits can also prevent overexertion and injuries.

- Arrange your work and your workstation to minimize reaching, bending, twisting, and awkward postures.

- Take minibreaks when performing strenuous tasks so that you can stretch and relax tense muscles and give them a chance to recover.

- Do not lift, carry, push, or pull more than your physical capabilities.
    - Get help or use mechanical aids.

- Pay attention to your body, and seek prompt treatment for injuries caused by overexertion.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

Ask participants to talk about overexertion risks in their job and how they prevent injury.

CONCLUSION:

- Take precautions to prevent overexertion and painful injuries.

- Injuries due to overexertion on the job can be painful and take time to heal. Always take proper precautions to prevent overexertion and injury.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

Have your employees take the Preventing Overexertion quiz. By testing their knowledge, you can judge their ability to avoid injuries caused by overexertion and whether they need to review this important topic again soon.

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How to prevent overexertion—Safe lifting and carrying

- When you lift:
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  - Keep your heels down, and turn your feet slightly out.
  - Squat by bending at the hips and knees.
  - Use your leg and stomach muscles to power the lift.
  - Maintain your back's natural curves as you lift by keeping your head up.
- When you carry:
  - Point your feet in the direction of your move.
  - Take small steps to turn your body as a single unit; don't twist.
  - Hug the load, walk at a steady pace, and rest when you need to.

Neutral posture

- Keep your head straight and face forward while you work.

- Maintain your back's natural curves, avoiding slouching.

- Keep arms hanging comfortably at your side, shoulders not hunched, and elbows close to your sides.

- Keep wrists in a straight line with forearms.

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your weight balanced.

Other safe work habits

- Arrange your work and your workstation to avoid reaching, bending, twisting, and awkward postures.

- Take minibreaks when performing strenuous tasks so that you can stretch and relax tense muscles and give them a chance to recover.

- Do not lift, carry, push, or pull more than your physical capabilities.
  - Get help or use mechanical aids.
- Pay attention to your body and seek prompt treatment for injuries caused by overexertion.

PREVENTING OVEREXERTION QUIZ

1. **Overexertion is a minor workplace risk and rarely causes injuries.**
   a. True   b. False

2. **Which of these activities could lead to an overexertion injury?**
   a. Lifting or carrying too heavy a load
   b. Frequent bending, reaching, and stretching
   c. Both a and b

3. **Poor posture can contribute to overexertion and result in injury.**
   a. True   b. False

4. **Which of these is a factor that can contribute to overexertion?**
   a. Being overweight
   b. Being out of shape
   c. Both a and b

5. **Back injuries on the job are often caused by overexertion.**
   a. True   b. False

6. **Which of these is a common sign of an injury caused by overexertion?**
   a. Pain, stiffness, or swelling
   b. Headache and nausea
   c. Both a and b

7. **Injuries caused by overexertion heal quickly and are never disabling.**
   a. True   b. False

8. **To prevent overexerting when you lift, lock your knees and bend over at the waist to pick up a load from the ground.**
   a. True   b. False

9. **If a load is too heavy to lift alone, get help to reduce the risk of overexertion.**
   a. True   b. False

10. **It's a good idea to take minibreaks when performing strenuous tasks so that you can relax tense muscles.**
    a. True   b. False

When you have completed this quiz, turn it in to your supervisor.

Name:_____   Date:_____