

SPRAINS, STRAINS, AND MUSCULAR PAINS

Firefighting is a dangerous occupation with injury rates exceeding most occupational groups.

In 2015, Strains, sprains, and muscular pain resulted in more than half the major types of injuries received during fireground operations (53%) and non-fireground injuries (60%). NFPA – "U.S. Firefighter Injuries – 2015"



Help Prevent Sprains, Strains, and Muscular Pain

1. Prevent Falls:

Keep Work Area Clear

Depending on your immediate work environment this can be impossible. Mentally prepare yourself for unexpected situations such as smoke inhibiting your vision. Walk slowly or even get on your knees to move about. This can help prevent you from falling over objects that are in your way.

Slippery Surfaces

Since water is ever present at fire scenes, make sure you take precaution when climbing up or down ladders.

2. Lifting Heavy Objects:

Your job demands strenuous activity without warning. Make sure stretching is part of your daily workout regimen. Stretching helps strengthen muscles to prepare you for lifting heavy objects.

Also, remembering proper lifting techniques will help save your back!

A. Wide Base of Support. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart, with one foot slightly ahead of the other.

B. Squat Down. Don't bend at the waist. Instead squat down bending the knees and hips only.

C. Keep Good Posture. Keep your back straight, chest out and

Icy Surfaces

Icy is common in Oklahoma during the winter months. Make sure your boots have good traction and use items to help with icy surfaces such as salt.

Uneven Surfaces

Make sure your boots have good ankle support. Be aware of your foot placement when walking or climbing uneven surfaces.

shoulders back while looking forward.

D. Lift Slowly. Lift slowly by straightening your knees and hips. Don't forget to keep your back straight and to continue looking forward.

E. Hold. Hold the object close to your body at belly button level. Never carry heavy objects over shoulder level.

F. Moving Object. Keep your body in line while walking with the object. Do not twist at the waist.

G. Set Object Down. Be careful when setting down heavy objects. Take care to squat, bending your knees and hips only.

3. When Tired, Avoid Strenuous Activity:

Know your limitations. Make sure you are getting plenty of sleep and exercise to help you perform well in your firefighting duties.

Resources:

<http://www.webmd.com/back-pain/proper-lifting-technique>

<http://www.nfpa.org/news-and-research/fire-statistics-and-reports/fire-statistics/the-fire-service/fatalities-and-injuries/firefighter-injuries-in-the-united-states>

<http://www.fireengineering.com/articles/2016/01/firefighter-training-sprains-strains.html>

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