

Safety Bulletin



Sprains and Strains

Sprains and strains present a hazard to all workers, regardless of their position. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has found that “Sprains and Strains” to be the number one cause of non-fatal work place injuries in the United States and account for about one third of all injuries in construction.

A **sprain** is an injury to a ligament, the tough fibrous tissue that connects bones to other bones. Sprain injuries involve a stretching or tearing of this tissue. Ankle, knee and wrist injuries account for the majority of sprains.

A **strain** is an injury to either a muscle or a tendon, the tissue that connects muscles to bones. Back injuries are the most prevalent in regard to strains. Depending on the severity of the injury, a strain may be a simple overstretch of the muscle or tendon, or it can be a partial or complete tear.

These soft tissue injuries occur frequently, are painful, sometimes disabling, and often accompanied by lengthy recovery periods.

By evaluating and recognizing the contributing factors to these types of injuries, the number of incidents can be significantly reduced. Work practices, personal habits and lifestyle all play a part in the likelihood of being injured.

Implementing a **Stretch and Flex** program to the work activity has many benefits. These include:

- Worker engagement
- Reduction of musculoskeletal, sprain and strain injuries
- Realignment of soft tissue structures resulting in better posture
- Stress reduction
- Improved circulation
- Enhanced coordination



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STRETCH AND FLEX



Tips:

- Hold each stretch for a minimum of 2-3 seconds
- Repeat the stretch on each side of the body
- Remember to breathe
- Focus on the muscle group being stretched
- Move into and out of your stretch smoothly and make adjustments, if needed
- Don't push yourself; don't aim for pain