

As a mechanical construction worker, you can help prevent non-trauma-related musculoskeletal pains and injuries by following safe work practices, staying in good physical health and using ergonomically designed tools and equipment whenever they are available.

Common Causes of Non-Trauma-Related Musculoskeletal Pains and Injuries

- Excessive bending and reaching
- Lifting and moving heavy objects incorrectly
- Performing work overhead for long periods without changing body positions
- Impact of aging
- Poor physical health

Safe Work Practices to Prevent Back Pain and Injury

- Stage materials at waist height using stacked pallets, tables, racks, carts, etc.
- Set up your immediate work area to get as close to the work as possible
- Position your feet so you can work from the best possible ergonomic posture
- When working from a ladder, lift, scaffold, etc., position the equipment so that you can work from the best possible ergonomic posture
- Use mechanized material-handling equipment whenever possible

When you have to lift materials by hand:

- Assess the weight of the item, and get help if you need it
- Stand with feet shoulder width apart, as close to the object as possible
- Get a firm grip

- Keep the natural curves in your back by keeping your butt down and your head up
- Lift straight up making your legs do most of the work (don't twist your torso)

Tips to Improve Your Personal Health

- If you smoke and want to quit, take advantage of available programs
- Watch your weight by eating healthy foods
- Stay hydrated to prevent muscle weakness and fatigue
- Do cardiovascular and strength training to keep physically fit
- Stretch and flex your muscles:
 - When you arrive at work
 - After breaks
 - After long periods of repeated tasks
 - **Note:** Never lock your joints, force or bounce a stretch, or stretch to the point of pain

Ergonomically Designed Tools and Equipment

- Take advantage of tools with ergonomic handles, grips, built-in clutches and anti-vibration features
- Use construction equipment that reduces reaching and keeps workers in the best possible ergonomic position