

Lifting, Unloading, and Strains

Strain injuries are one of the top four injuries types, when looking at both cost and frequency. Strain injuries are also easily preventable! To prevent strain injuries, remember what actually *causes* back injuries:

1. *Amount of the Lift*

- Lifting more than 40lbs can present a strain potential to the back, shoulders, arms, and other parts of the bodies. Know which items are heaviest, and require alternate methods of lifting.

2. *Repetition of the Lifts*

- How many times does an employee perform a lift? If an employee performs the same lift 10 times an hour, and works for 5 hours a day, and 5 days a week, then that is 50 lifts per day, and 250 lifts per week. In a year, this would add up to 12,500 lifts in a 50 week period! Even if the object is light weight, the strain potential will add up with this many lifts.

3. *Posture*

- Is the employee lifting correctly? Are lifts being done with legs and not with the back? Does the employee have to extend his or her arms when lifting? Does the employee have to twist when lifting? All of these are factors when it comes to strains.

4. *Travel*

- Does the employee have to carry the load a distance? If so, is the path clear? Slipping, tripping, bumping into people, or others bumping into the employee can wrench the load, causing serious injuries. The path for the employee should be clear, with no objects on the floor (such as bun trays, boxes, or other items).

McDonalds Corporate Policies Say This:

Proper Lifting and Unloading Guidelines

- ✓ *Keep the distance and height for carrying and lifting the load to a minimum.* Carrying for long distance will increase the chances of a strain. Also, lifting to stack objects high not only increases the chances for a strain, but also being struck by falling objects!
- ✓ *Unload a truck or cart as close as possible to the storage area.* Know where everything will be placed in storage! Keep aisle ways clear for foot traffic. Know where items will go before you place them.
- ✓ *Use a portable conveyor when possible.* Eliminate lifting wherever possible!
- ✓ *Carry only one box of MacFries or beef patties at a time.* Know what items are heavy, and carry only one item, or ask for assistance.
- ✓ *Keep the size of the load manageable.* Just because an object is light weight, does not mean employees should overload themselves by carrying multiple items. Watch how they carry and unload items, and respond accordingly. Keep the load under 40lbs.
- ✓ *Place heavy items on shelves above the floor (middle shelves only).* Doing this will help to reduce the need to lift, and in the case of storing heavy items higher up, will also reduce potential of being struck by heavy loads.
- ✓ *Use a hand cart for very heavy loads.* This also extends to awkward loads. Trash should be carried to the dumpster with carts, or two person lifts.
- ✓ *Use extra caution when loading or retrieving boxes from walk-in freezers, since the freezer floor may be slick due to spills or ice build-up.* A slip and fall while carrying a heavy object is especially dangerous.
- ✓ *Do not toss garbage bags into dumpsters. Lift them carefully, and seek help as needed.* Liquids from drink cups can make a bag of garbage especially heavy. Test the load and lift carefully!
- ✓ *Use caution when opening and closing the safe door.*

Using Proper Lifting Techniques

Teaching proper lifting procedures is an important part of your safety program. Stress the basics of proper lifting during training and follow-up. Make lifting a discussion during a safety team meeting. And always discuss the causes for any injuries that have occurred as a result of improper lifting.

Proper Lifting – How to Prevent Injuries:

1. Review the size of the load, and stand with feet shoulder width apart.
2. Bend your knees, and lift with your legs. Your legs are designed better for lifting than your back!
3. When lifting, *never* twist – twisting puts stresses on your back and can contribute to strains.
4. When lifting, *never* extend your arms. Extending your arms puts greater stresses on your back, shoulders, and arms. Keep the load close to your body!
5. Ask for assistance! If you are ever unsure if you can safely lift an object, ask for assistance. Two people can lift more safely than one!



Proper Postures and Sore Backs

People who work in restaurants are exposed to strains and sprains from prolonged standing and repetitive or prolonged reaching while standing at cashier stands, cooking and turning food on a hot grill or stove surface, or other positions.

Prevention:

Identify strain and sprain hazards in your worksite and find ways to decrease them by applying ergonomic solutions. For example:

- ✓ Avoid static postures by continually changing your position.
- ✓ Wear shoes with well-cushioned insteps and soles.



- ✓ Use height-adjustable work surfaces, if available.
- ✓ Minimize reaching by organizing your work environment so that most cooking processes can be completed within easy reach and while keeping your elbows in close to your body.



Preventing Back Strains

Think About This:



- ✓ Garbage – Liquids in trash bags will make the load much heavier – Test the load before lifting, and empty before it is too full!
- ✓ Use carts for trash bags or other heavy items!
- ✓ Beef Patties, Chicken McNuggets®, Tea Containers, and other frozen foods will be the heaviest. Test the load first, and ask for help if needed!
- ✓ Never lift more than one heavy item at a time. Divide the load where possible!
- ✓ Place heavy items on middle shelves to reduce lifting. These include frozen meats, soda syrup boxes, and other heavier items.
- ✓ Carts and Dollies – Use when transporting heavy items, multiple items, containers of Ice, or Iced Tea

