



In this Issue

Benefits of Stretching

Stretching Exercises

Hand Safety

Do's and Don'ts of Stretching

- ❖ **Do** warm up before stretching, swing your arms, make hip circles walk in place.
- ❖ **Don't** pull too hard, just enough to feel a stretch but not painful.
- ❖ **Do** Stretch slowly into each position.
- ❖ **Don't** bounce which may cause muscles or tendons to tear.
- ❖ **Do** hold your stretch for 20 seconds, release and repeat.
- ❖ **Don't** hold your breath, just breathe normally.
- ❖ **Do** keep up with your stretching on a daily basis.

Benefits of stretching

Making sure your team members are physically ready for work reduces injury risk and promotes a health, safety and team culture. Just as you benefit from stretching and warm-up exercises before sports or just day-to-day life, companies and their team members both benefit from a Work Readiness program consisting of stretching and warm-up exercises.

- Reduce fatigue: By increasing blood supply and nutrients to your muscles
- Improve posture: By loosening up tight muscles
- Improve muscle coordination: By helping tired muscles synchronize properly
- Increase flexibility: By allowing muscles and joints to work in their full range of motion
- Prevent repetitive strain injuries: By warming up your body and reducing the likelihood of sudden muscle strain
- Improve circulation: By loosening up muscles and relieving pressure on surrounding blood vessels.

Providing your employees with a pre shift stretching routine shows your commitment to their health and creates a stronger safety culture.

Stretching Exercises

When doing stretches, stand with feet shoulder-width apart, and knees bent slightly, rather than a rigid stance. Hold each stretch for about 3-5 seconds (if doing them at home, 15-20 seconds) and remember to breath!

- ◆ Neck stretch – tilt head forward till you feel a slight stretch, lift head back to normal position, repeat tilting head to the right, to the back, and to the left. Repeat the whole process several times.
- ◆ Shoulder shrug – lift shoulders to ears, squeeze shoulder muscles, relax as you drop shoulders and release. Repeat several times.
- ◆ Shoulder stretch – reach one arm across your chest and gently use your other arm to pull it toward you to deepen the stretch. Relax arms at your side and repeat with the other arm. Do this several times.
- ◆ Arm circles – with arms out to the sides, make small clockwise circular motions for about 10 seconds, then reverse. Do this several times. You can also repeat with larger circular motions.
- ◆ Wrist stretch – hold one arm out forward with palms up, with other hand gently pull fingers down towards the floor. Hold this for about 10-15 seconds. Switch arms and repeat stretch.
- ◆ Side bend stretch - Raise your right arm overhead and bend your upper body to the left in a reaching motion. Keep facing straight ahead—don't twist your body as you bend. Switch sides and do the stretch in the opposite direction. Repeat both sides.
- ◆ Hip flexor lunges - Step right leg back, lift heel up so you're on ball of right foot. Keeping back straight and head up, lower heel down slightly until you feel a stretch in right hip flexor. Hold, release and switch sides.
- ◆ Hamstring stretch – Keep back straight, put one leg out. Bend from your hip joints to bring your chest toward your outstretched leg while slightly bending the other leg at the knee. Hold, release and switch sides.
- ◆ Back stretch - Stand with your feet hip width apart. Move slowly and gently reaching hands down the front of your legs towards the toes. Hold and roll back up into a standing position.
- ◆ Standing heel raises – Raise your heels until standing on toes. Hold, then release slowly lowering heel. Do this several times.



Help.
On the spot.

Tips for Hand Safety

- ❖ Remove rings and jewelry (especially if loose) from hands and wrists.
- ❖ Never put your hands near sharp or moving/rotating parts.
- ❖ Use proper cutting tools and techniques and make sure the blade is in good condition.
- ❖ Never place hands where you can't see them.
- ❖ Be aware of pinch points and crush zones.
- ❖ Choose the proper gloves for the task and that they fit properly.
- ❖ Make sure safety guards and emergency stops are working properly
- ❖ Properly stretch hand muscles and tendons periodically if performing repetitive tasks.
- ❖ Stay alert and focused on what you are doing.

Hand Safety

Worker's hands are used for everything from handling packages in commercial settings to using cutting and drilling equipment. No tool is more valuable and versatile than the human hand. A recent study conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor found that 23 percent of all work-related injuries involved injuries to the hands or fingers. Hand injuries are the second most common reason for missed work after back and neck injuries, and count for 1/3rd of chronic injuries, 1/4th of lost working time, and 1/5th of permanent disability.

Understanding the risks and types of hand injuries is essential in preventing them.

Hand injury statistics

- ◆ Approximately 1 million workers are treated in an ER or Urgent Care for hand injuries annually.
- ◆ 33.3% of hand injuries were in manufacturing.
- ◆ 70% of workers who experienced a hand injury were not wearing gloves
- ◆ 30% of workers had gloves on, but they were damaged or inadequate for the work task.

Most common causes of Hand Injuries

- ◆ Improper use of tools or using the wrong tool
- ◆ Lifting or applying force incorrectly
- ◆ Using the wrong PPE or not using any PPE
- ◆ Distraction or lack of awareness/focus due to complacency
- ◆ Inadequate assessment of risks involved
- ◆ Bypassing safety procedures
- ◆ Cutting corners and rushing
- ◆ Repetitive motions and overuse

Types of hand injuries

- ◆ Lacerations, cuts and punctures – the most common type of hand injury. Caused by sharp or jagged objects, whether from a tool, surface, or machinery, can be found anywhere in any workplace environment. Injuries may vary from a minor cut that simply needs to stop the bleeding and clean the wound to prevent infections, to more serious injuries where the muscle, tendon or nerve is damaged and may need surgery and/or a hand therapist and rehabilitation.
- ◆ Crush injuries – the 2nd most common type of hand injury. They can happen in many ways such as; heavy objects falling on them, getting caught between moving objects or parts of machinery, injury with a hammer, or any compressive force that pinches or crushes.
- ◆ Muscle strain or overuse syndrome – caused by repetitive motion, using hand held tools for long periods of time, or poor body mechanics and is associated with tendonitis, pain, stiffness and muscle weakness.
- ◆ Burn injuries – caused by a heat source, electrical source, chemical source or friction source. The injury can range from superficial to severe depending on the source of injury, degree of the source, and the length of time in contact with that source.
- ◆ Fractures or broken bones – the most common causes being falling and trying to break the fall with an outstretched hand, falling on the hand, equipment accidents, (tuggers, forklifts and mechanized pallet jacks) and machinery accidents.



Most people take for granted how much they use their hands, often performing tasks on “auto-pilot.” Until we suffer an injury and it affects our ability to work and sometimes affects our overall quality of life.

Ultimately, it's up to each of us to follow the guidelines and practice safety!