Toolbox Talks are intended to facilitate health and safety discussions. For additional Toolbox Talks, please visit [http://www.ehs.iastate.edu/shops](http://www.ehs.iastate.edu/shops).

**General Information:**

Back injuries are one of the leading causes of lost-time or restricted duty in the workplace and can lead to years of discomfort and disability.

**Back injuries can result from many factors, to include but not limited to:**

- Repetitive motion
- Weight of load being lifted
- Duration a load is carried or held
- Your height, weight, strength and gender
- The position of your body when lifting or carrying a load

**Before you lift a heavy object, think of the following to help avoid injury:**

- Do you need to lift the object manually?
- How heavy is the item?
- Where are you moving the object?
- What route do you have to follow?

**Tips to Help Avoid Back Injuries**

- Stretch and exercise the back before starting each day or before lifting heavy loads
- Inspect your work area for slip, trip and fall hazards
- Lift with a partner or find lifting equipment to help move heavy loads
- Wear back braces if required to lift and carry heavy loads or if your back needs to be supported for long periods
- Avoid twisting and turning while lifting a load, use your legs to position and move your torso
- Move your work area closer to you to avoid unnecessary twisting and reaching
- Avoid sudden jerks or pulls on a load that could cause an injury

**Resources:**

- [http://www.ehs.iastate.edu/occupational/ergonomics](http://www.ehs.iastate.edu/occupational/ergonomics)
- [https://training.ehs.iastate.edu/IowaSU/site/](https://training.ehs.iastate.edu/IowaSU/site/)

**Discussion Topics**

- What activities exist in your work area that could cause back injuries?
- What are some things that can be done in your work area to help minimize the chances for back injuries?