



# PREVENTING SOFT TISSUE INJURY

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Soft tissue injury is one of the most common injuries in construction. Soft tissue refers to tissues that connect, support or surround other structures and organs of the body. Here are some of the most common soft tissue injuries reported in construction:

- Muscle sprains and strains;
- Injuries to muscles, ligaments, intervertebral discs and other structures in the back;
- Injuries to nerves, ligaments and tendons in the wrists, arms, shoulders, neck or legs;
- Abdominal hernias; and
- Chronic pain.

These injuries can occur suddenly or over a prolonged period of time. Risk factors for soft tissue injuries include awkward postures, repetitive motion, excessive force, static posture, vibration and poorly designed tools. The good news is that soft tissue injuries, and the conditions caused by them, are preventable.

The following precautions can help prevent soft tissue injuries:

- Stretch before you use your muscles.
- Avoid bending or twisting the back or neck.
- Avoid overexertion.
- Use ladders to reach overhead objects and mechanical equipment to carry and move heavy materials.
- Use proper lifting techniques. Lift with your legs, not your back.
- Make the most of your break times and stretch muscles that have become tense from continuous sitting and/or exposure to vibration.
- Use tools properly. When possible, keep tools between your waist and shoulder height, which is considered the “lifting zone.” This gives you the most leverage, and allows the strongest muscles to do the work.
- Keep your work area clean and free of hazards. Pick up loose objects from the floor, and clean up spills immediately to eliminate tripping and slipping hazards.

Take action today. Decide what you can do right now to help prevent a soft tissue injury, and then do it. You’ll end up with a safer workplace and fewer workplace injuries.

[Download a recording form here.](#)