

Safety FOCUSED

DECEMBER 2017

Preventing Sprains and Strains

Sprains and strains can result from lifting injuries, being hit by falling objects or even a simple misstep. Protect yourself and others from these painful injuries by always practicing safety on the job.

The Hazards of Headphones

In many workplaces, it's common for employees to listen to music while they work. While this provides workers with entertainment while they perform their job duties, the overuse of headphones may lead to hearing loss over time. Read this article to learn how to protect yourself.

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A monthly safety newsletter from



Preventing Sprains and Strains

Sprains, strains and tears to muscles and connective tissues are some of the most common injuries workers experience. Sprains and strains can result from lifting injuries, being hit by falling objects or even a simple misstep. Overusing your muscles can also cause these injuries.

To reduce your risk of experiencing sprains and strains on the job, keep the following tips in mind:

- Use extreme caution if you are lifting something particularly heavy. When in doubt, ask for help.
- Reduce repetitive movements if possible. Chronic strains are usually the result of overusing the same muscles.
- Use proper form when completing tasks, as extensive gripping can increase the risk of hand and forearm strains.
- Consider your posture when sitting for long periods of time and maintain an overall relaxed position.
- Maintain a healthy fitness level outside of work to keep your body strong and flexible.
- Stretch before you begin working, and take short breaks throughout the day to stretch and rebalance your body.

If you have any questions or concerns about sprains or strains, do not hesitate to contact your supervisor.

The Hazards of Headphones

In many workplaces, it's common for employees to listen to music while they work. While this provides workers with entertainment while they perform their job duties, the overuse of headphones may lead to hearing loss over time, particularly if they listen to media at a high volume.

The following are some common symptoms to look out for if you are concerned that frequent headphone use is contributing to hearing loss:

- Straining to understand conversations
- Having to watch people's faces closely to understand what they're saying
- Continuously increasing the volume on the TV or radio, especially to the point where others complain
- Sounds seem muffled after listening to music
- Ringing in the ears (tinnitus)

If you find that you have any of these symptoms, visit your doctor and ask for a hearing test. Your doctor will be able to tell you if you are at risk for further hearing loss.

To continue to use headphones at work safely, there are a number of strategies to keep in mind.

If you use a smartphone or MP3 player, check to see if you can set a volume limit on it. Many devices have this feature built-in and include instructions on how to set it in the manual.

Another way to reduce your risk of hearing loss is to purchase headphones that go over your ears, rather than ear buds. Ear buds fit inside your ear and don't provide any noise isolation, which causes people using them to turn the volume up louder.

As a general rule, set your music volume no higher than 60 to 70 percent of the maximum, and limit listening to one hour per day. Doing so will ensure that you can enjoy your favorite media without harming your hearing.



MUSIC AND HEARING LOSS



Many popular smartphones and MP3 players can play music at **volumes exceeding 100 decibels**. Long or repeated exposure to sounds at or **above 85 decibels can cause permanent hearing loss**.