



Ouch! Yikes! Ooof!

Did you know that 40% of construction site accidents result in strains and sprains. And that these strains and sprains are caused by a wide cross-section of bad safety habits?

So, what can we do about it? How about performing a personal safety audit to determine if you're hurting yourself by some of these same bad safety habits. Let's start with your use of available lifting devices.

You're attempting to unload a heavy pump off a truck bed. Maybe it weighs eighty to a hundred pounds. Oh well, you'll give it a try. And then, when it's halfway off the truck bed, something happens and it falls to the ground.

But on the way to the ground it hits your foot, or maybe you twist your torso, trying to keep it from falling on top of you. The net result: A bad back strain....or a knee sprain....or a broken foot....or badly torn cartilage....or a massive, bleeding wound.

What could you have done to avoid this accident? How about getting one or more co-workers to help you lift this pump? Or maybe there's a forklift on the jobsite that could have easily lifted this pump to the ground. Or maybe you could have called the jobsite foreman for advise as to how you could have "safely" lowered this pump to the ground.

Sure, everything we've said above is hindsight. But after an accident, it's easy to figure out a way we could have avoided this injury.

What we want to do is a hazard awareness of the potential harm or injury that a careless act could produce. What were your options before the accident? Was there help available? Was there lifting equipment? Did your pride get in your way?

The sprains and strains on jobsites are not always the fault of the employee. Maybe they're partially the result of poor supervision. Maybe the "new hire" hasn't been given any safety training to help him perform his work site assignments. And, just "maybe," you are responsible. We can't always blame the other guy. Look in the mirror when you first get up in the morning and say to yourself: "Could I have prevented this accident?"

In spite of the increased use of machinery and equipment in construction work, most materials put in a structure are moved by hand during some phase of building. If caution is not observed, severe back injuries and hernias could occur. Each worker should know the proper method of lifting heavy objects:

- Secure solid footing.
- Bend at the knees to grasp the weight.
- Keep the back straight.
- Get a firm hold.
- Lift gradually by straightening the legs.
- Get help when the object is too heavy or bulky for you to lift comfortably.
- Reverse the procedure when putting down the load.

Some other tips on lifting:

- Wear gloves when handling rough equipment or material.
- Keep the load close to your body.
- See that your fingers and toes are in the clear.
- Don't twist your body while lifting.

Get help!!! Get help!!! Get help!!! Get help!!! Don't lift it by yourself . . . GET HELP!!! GET HELP!!!