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## **Warming Up - “Construction is an Athletic Event”**

The importance of being warmed up prior to starting construction work (or any work involving heavy lifting) is just like getting ready for a sporting event.

Stretching is a means to avoid the most common body sprain/strain injuries.

Stretching before lifting is especially helpful to avoid back injuries.

According to safety experts, over half of all workers’ compensation claims and costs were due to sprain/strains.

### Overexertion Effects:

Backs; Trunks (Waist, Hips); Knees; Shoulders, Arms and Elbows - The hardest injury to live with is a back injury; once you are injured expect repeat injuries.

One professional study indicates that once you do injure your back, you are five times more likely to suffer a re-injury.

### Stretching:

Brick masons working on a major project in Hillsboro, Oregon, demonstrated that those who stretched before starting work did not have any back sprain/strain or lifting injuries.

### Helpful Hints:

Go into stretching with a relaxed and open mind. Stretch to the point where it is comfortable, not painful.

Do not strain when you stretch – straining keeps the muscle from relaxing.

Concentrate on the muscle being stretched – think about the good feeling of a proper stretch. As the feeling of the stretch changes to a mild stretch, stretch a little further, comfortable with no pain.

Do not bounce when you stretch. That can cause injuries.

Always stretch to the tight side first.

Breathe with a slow, normal rhythm. Do not hold your breath.

Demonstrate proper stretching exercises.

Remember:

Construction is an athletic event. Stretching before you start work will make your job easier and helps prevent injuries on the job. Try it at home too.