

# NBSIA Member Services Safety Bulletin

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## PREVENT OVEREXERTION INJURIES



Overexertion is the leading cause of injury over all age groups—both in the workplace and off-the-job. According to the National Safety Council (NSC), overexertion causes 35 percent of all work-related injuries and is the largest contributor to workers' compensation costs.

### Causes of Overexertion

What causes overexertion? It generally comes down to ergonomics. Overexertion can be caused by:

- Repetitive motions
- Working in extreme temperatures without proper water, shade and rest
- Using excessive force
- Prolonged sitting or standing
- Poor body mechanics and working in awkward positions
- Excessive lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, reaching or stretching

### Know the Signs

It is important to listen to your body and know the signs of overexertion in order to prevent injury. “Symptoms can include everything from posture problems and intermittent discomfort, to tendonitis, chronic pain and disability,” says the NSC.

If you are feeling any of these, other discomfort or pain, stop and analyze your posture and movements. Are you engaging the right muscle sets? Are you over-reaching? Is there another way this task can be done? If you are unsure about how to safely complete the task, ask your supervisor.

### Prevent Overexertion

While knowing signs and symptoms will help you prevent injury from overexertion, regular exercise, stretching and strength training can help you

prevent overexertion altogether. The better prepared your body is to handle different situations, the better you will feel.

Whether at work or at home, being mindful of your body movements will promote your health in the long run. Keep these things in mind:

- Before lifting any object, regardless of weight or location, plan the lift. Keep your back straight and lift with your legs, keep the object in your “power zone” (in front of your core).
- Prevent repetitive motion injuries by taking breaks or switching repetitive tasks when you can.
- When in a sustained position, take breaks every 30 minutes or so. Stretch gently, and never lock your knees.
- When working at a desk, move commonly used objects within reach, adjust your chair, computer monitor and footrest to best support your body.
- Report ongoing discomfort and pain to your supervisor.

### Resources from NBSIA

NBSIA offers ergonomic evaluations for a variety of job types, not just desk jobs. In addition, training is available for safe lifting techniques, back injury prevention, and warming-up for work (stretching).

Submit a request for free on-site safety training at [www.nbsia.org/free-onsite-safety-training](http://www.nbsia.org/free-onsite-safety-training)

### Sources

<https://www.nsc.org/work-safety/safety-topics/ergonomics-overexertion>



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