

# Back Health

Whether it's dull and achy or sharp and stabbing, back pain can make it hard to concentrate on the job. Unfortunately, many occupations can place significant demands on your back. It is important to understand what causes back pain and what we can do to prevent it.

## **Common causes:**

- Poor manual handling techniques such as lifting, bending, pulling, etc.
- Frequent twisting movements
- Accidents such as slips, trips and falls
- Maintaining poor postures for long periods, such as sitting and standing

## **Common back injuries:**

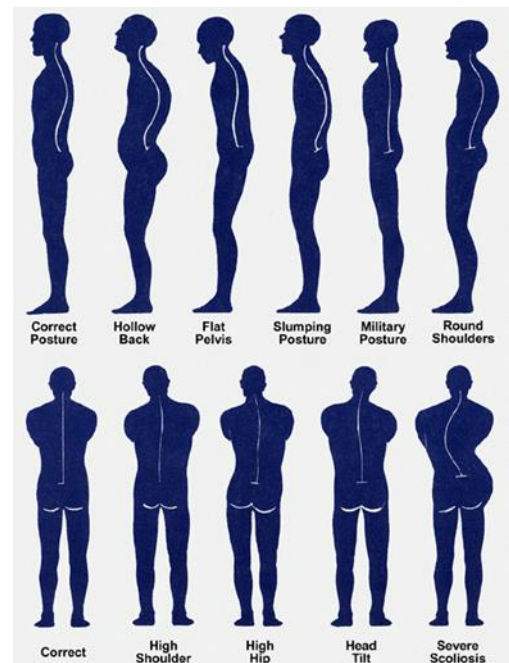
- Intervertebral disc compression and herniation:  
The disc becomes smaller due to excessive load on the spine. This can be caused by awkward postures or sitting for prolonged periods. It can also result in a disc bulge
- Nerve compression:  
The disc bulges out applying pressure to surrounding nerves, causing pain to radiate to other parts of the body, usually down the leg.
- Muscle strains and spasms:  
Usually occurs when lifting too much weight and too quickly. Pain is usually felt on movement at the point of injury.

## **Why do they occur?**

- Poor knowledge and training for back health
- Poor manual handling/lifting techniques
- Poor strength and conditioning
- Trying to do too much, too quick

## **How can we prevent them?**

- Implementing safe manual handling techniques
- Taking regular short breaks to give the body a rest (30 seconds every 15 minutes)
- Looking after your body, stretch and exercise regularly
- Be safe and smart when working



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