SCHOOLS INSURANCE AUTHORITY

Attention: Risk Management, Nutrition Services, M&O, School Site Administrators

Safety Bulletin- Preventing Strains and Sprains
January 2025

Strains and sprains are among the most common workplace injuries, often caused by overexertion, improper lifting, repetitive movements, or slips and falls. These injuries can lead to pain, reduced productivity, and time away from work. Follow these tips to keep yourself and your coworkers safe and injury-free.

Understanding Strains and Sprains:

- **Strain:** An injury to muscles or tendons caused by overstretching or overuse.
- **Sprain:** An injury to ligaments caused by stretching or tearing due to sudden movements or impacts.

Risk Factors:

1. Poor posture or body mechanics.
2. Inadequate warm-up before physical activity.
3. Repetitive tasks without breaks.
4. Slippery or uneven surfaces.
5. Carrying heavy or awkward loads.

Prevention Tips:

1. **Practice Proper Lifting Techniques:**
    - Bend at your knees, not your waist.
    - Keep the load close to your body.
    - Avoid twisting your torso while lifting.
2. **Stay Physically Fit:**
    - Engage in regular strength and flexibility exercises.
    - Focus on core strength to support your back and balance.
3. **Use Ergonomic Tools and Equipment:**
    - Adjust desk and chair heights for proper posture.
    - Use rolling carts or trolleys for transporting books, supplies, or equipment.

4. **Wear Appropriate Footwear:**
    - Choose non-slip, supportive shoes, especially for those who stand or walk frequently.
    - Replace worn-out shoes promptly to maintain grip and comfort.
5. **Maintain a Safe School Environment:**
    - Ensure hallways and classrooms are free from clutter.
    - Report and address spills or hazards immediately.
6. **Take Breaks and Rotate Tasks:**
    - Avoid repetitive strain by alternating between sitting, standing, and walking during long hours.
    - Incorporate stretch breaks into classroom or office routines.
7. **Warm-Up Before Physical Activity:**
    - For staff involved in physical education or supervising outdoor activities, perform gentle stretches to prepare muscles.
    - Focus on areas prone to injury, such as the back, legs, and shoulders.

For additional information, visit the SIA YouTube channel to view helpful videos including *Injury Prevention*, *How to Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls*, and *Create Your Ideal Workstation*.