

# White Spot

Health and Safety Information, 2002  
Preventing Strains and Sprains



We know you care about occupational health and safety. It's good for your restaurant's workers and it's good for your bottom line. The attached materials were developed by White Spot Restaurants for their own use, and are working for them.

White Spot states:

While the primary focus of our restaurant operators and their staff is guest service, we need to keep safety at the top of our minds. There's a tendency to associate risk with heavy industry, but the truth is, accidents really do happen in our industry, and some of them can be serious.

We are pleased to be able to share some of the resources that our team has developed and hope that other employers and employees in the hospitality sector benefit from them.

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), in consultation with the British Columbia Restaurant and Foodservices Association (BCRFA) and the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association (CRFA), is pleased to send you the enclosed restaurant-specific occupational health and safety information concerning musculoskeletal injuries. A commitment to safety in the workplace makes good business sense and contributes to keeping workers happy and healthy. Both BCRFA and CRFA fully support the foodservice industry taking proactive steps that will contribute to making our workplaces safe.

We encourage you to review the enclosed material and incorporate the most useful information in your operation's health and safety program. This material contains basic information and will assist you in dealing with occupational health and safety in your restaurant.

For more information regarding a complete program contact the WCB Prevention Information Line at 604 276-3100 or toll-free at 1 800 621-SAFE (7233).

Online, go to [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com).

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## MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURY (MSI) RISK ASSESSMENTS

Strains and sprains are known as musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs). MSI claims resulting from overexertion and repetitive motion accidents account for about one-third of WCB claims.

Employers are required to conduct risk assessments that evaluate how work is organized and performed and that identify potential MSI hazards. After identifying potential hazards:

- Assess the risks to workers
- Eliminate or minimize the risks
- Educate and train workers in safe work practices and procedures

As part of the assessment, employers should regularly review the first aid treatment records for any signs and symptoms of possible MSIs as well as any previous injury claims information. This type of information from each workplace will help employers to better understand the types of MSIs that are common in their work environment. Also, any accident investigation records of MSI incidents will contain valuable information to help determine possible causes of MSIs.

For more information about preventing musculoskeletal injuries, see these WCB publications:

- *Ergonomic Tips for the Hospitality Industry (a series of 8 pamphlets)*
  - Preventing Injuries to Bar Staff
  - Preventing Injuries to Dishwashers
  - Preventing Injuries to Front Desk Agents
  - Preventing Injuries to Kitchen Staff
  - Preventing Injuries when Handling Luggage
  - Preventing Injuries to Room Attendants
  - Preventing Injuries to Servers
  - Preventing Injuries when Serving Banquets
- Back Talk: An Owner's Manual for Backs
- How to Make Your Computer Workstation Fit You
- Ergonomics Commentary 1 — Back Belts
- Ergonomics Commentary 2 — Wrist Braces
- Ergonomics Commentary 3 — PC Mouse
- Understanding the Risks of Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI)
- Preventing Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI)

To order these WCB publications:

Phone: 604-276-3068 in the Lower Mainland  
1-800-661-2112, local 3068, toll-free in BC

Fax: 604-279-7406

E-mail: [pubvid@wcb.bc.ca](mailto:pubvid@wcb.bc.ca)

WCB website: [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com) (available in PDF format on-line)

## **PREVENTING STRAINS & SPRAINS (SOFT TISSUE INJURIES)**

### **ADVICE FROM YOUR FELLOW TEAM MEMBERS "CLEAN AS YOU GO. IT MAKES IT EASIER FOR EVERYBODY."**

Many activities we perform at work can result in tired or sore muscles, which in turn may lead to serious injury. At White Spot the physical demands of some jobs include frequent lifting of heavy items in awkward positions. The chance of sprains and strains increases with the effort and frequency of lifts, and with the awkwardness of postures required to access and move these materials. Slips and falls can also cause serious strains and sprains. Risks for slips and falls include uneven or slippery floor surfaces, the presence of spilled materials, and excessively worn footwear soles. The good news is that preventing injuries need not be complicated.

You can't always add years to your life, but by following these guidelines you may add life to your years! Not only may you prevent a serious accident, you can take pride in your ability to keep your area clean, organized and guest-ready!

Here are some helpful guidelines that can go a long way to reduce the risk of strains and/or sprains:

- When pulling, pushing, lifting or carrying, use these techniques:
  - Place feet apart for good balance
  - Bend knees
  - Use smooth gradual motions
  - Avoid twisting your back
  - Keep loads close to your body
  - Avoid reaching objects that are above your shoulder height (keep objects and loads between your shoulders and mid-thigh level)
- Exercise regularly (for example, walk or run for 20 minutes four times a week)
- Warm up muscles used in work activities prior to your shift
- Report any physical discomforts to your management team before it's too late
- Ask for and give help when needed
- Stretch between busy periods and after any breaks
- Work with your management team and Health & Safety Committee members to prevent strains and sprains

# LIFTING

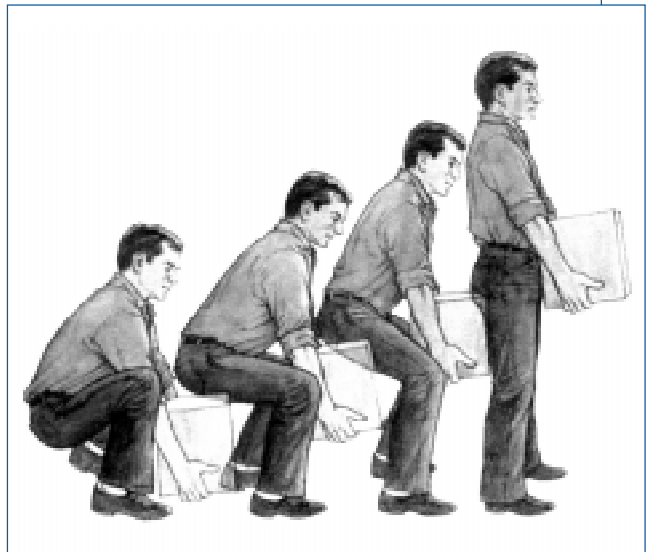
Sprains and strains are the most common type of work-related injury. Strains and sprains and other injuries to the muscles, tendons, and joints are known as musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs). Most MSIs result from overexertion accidents, and many of these are associated with lifting tasks.

For lifting tasks, you need to think about the force required to lift the load and about your posture. Muscles and tendons can be overloaded when you apply a strong force to lift a heavy object or if you use an awkward posture when lifting.

## PRINCIPALS FOR PREVENTING INJURIES FROM LIFTING

Follow these safety principles when moving heavy or awkward objects:

- Where possible, avoid lifting and carrying heavy or awkward objects. Instead, use mechanical devices such as forklifts, hoists, carts, or dollies.
- Get help from others if you need it.
- Lift smaller loads by planning and adjusting weight distribution ahead of time.
- Hold the object you are lifting as close to your body as possible.
- Avoid awkward work postures such as bending, reaching, and twisting. Try to keep the load between your knees and shoulders, without twisting your body. Pivot with your feet instead of twisting your back.
- Bend at your knees, not at your waist. This will help you keep your centre of balance and let the strong muscles in your legs do the lifting.
- Lift smoothly and slowly.
- Get a good grip. Use your hands, not just your fingers, to grip the load. Wear gloves to protect your hands if necessary.
- Avoid doing physically demanding lifting tasks for a long period. If possible, vary the task with another activity that uses different muscles.



Lift smoothly, without twisting your body.