Prevent Strains and Sprains Restaurant Safety Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

Strains and sprains are common injuries that can occur while working in a restaurant. A strain refers to the stretching or tearing of a muscle or tendon, while a sprain is the stretching or tearing of a ligament. Both injuries can be caused by repetitive motions, lifting heavy objects, or slips and falls.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

HOW STRAINS AND SPRAINS ARE CAUSED IN RESTAURANTS

- **Lifting heavy objects:** Lifting heavy boxes of supplies or equipment, such as cases of food, can strain your muscles and cause injury.
- **Repetitive motions:** Repeatedly performing the same motions, such as chopping vegetables or carrying trays, can lead to strains and sprains.
- **Slip and falls:** Spills and wet floors can cause slip and fall accidents, which can lead to strains and sprains.
- **Awkward positions:** Working in awkward positions, such as reaching overhead or bending down for extended periods of time, can put strain on your muscles and joints.
- **Overexertion:** Pushing yourself too hard, working too many hours, or not taking enough breaks can lead to overexertion and injury.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

PREVENTION OF STRAINS AND SPRAINS IN A RESTAURANT SETTING IS IMPORTANT

- **Reduces the risk of injury:** Strains and sprains can be

painful and debilitating, and they can also lead to time off work to recover.

- **Improves productivity:** Preventing strains and sprains can help to improve productivity and reduce the likelihood of work disruptions due to injury.
- **Reduces costs:** By preventing strains and sprains, employers can reduce costs associated with medical treatment, workers' compensation claims, and lost productivity.
- **Creates a safer work environment:** By implementing safety measures and promoting good work practices, employers can help to reduce the risk of injury and create a culture of safety in the workplace.

BEST RESTAURANT WORKER PRACTICES TO PREVENT STRAINS AND SPRAINS

Warm-up exercises: Take a few minutes before your shift to stretch your muscles and warm-up your body. This will help to reduce the risk of injury. Stretch before and after each shift.

Proper lifting techniques: When lifting heavy objects like boxes or crates, use proper lifting techniques. Bend your knees and keep your back straight. Use your legs to lift the weight, not your back.

Use carts or dollies: When possible, use carts or dollies to transport heavy items. This will reduce the strain on your body.

Wear appropriate footwear: Wear shoes that are comfortable, provide support, and have slip-resistant soles to prevent slips and falls.

Keep walkways clear: Make sure walkways are clear of obstacles and spills. This will reduce the risk of slips, trips, and falls.

Take breaks: Take regular breaks to rest and stretch your muscles. This will help to prevent fatigue and reduce the risk of injury.

Use ergonomic equipment: Use ergonomic equipment like adjustable chairs, tables, and keyboards to reduce the risk of strains and sprains associated with repetitive tasks.

Maintain good posture: Stand up straight and avoid hunching over while working.

Keep the workplace clean and organized: Clean up spills immediately and keep the workplace free of clutter to prevent slips and falls.

Communicate with coworkers: If you need help with a task, ask a coworker for assistance to avoid straining yourself.

MORE WORKER PROTECTION FOR ESSENTIAL RESTAURANT WORK

Clean-up tasks

Be aware of all potential hazards when performing clean-up tasks such as washing dishes, clearing tables, mopping floors, and emptying garbage. These tasks often involve repetitive reaching, overreaching, and lifting, which can lead to neck and back strains and sprains, especially if tasks are performed while assuming awkward postures.

- Reduce lifting during garbage removal by using garbage handling bags with wheels or garbage cans with wheels.
- Limit the size of garbage containers to limit the weight of the load employees must lift and dump.
- Install dumpsters at or below grade level.
- Rearrange workspaces so it is easier to reach for supplies used routinely and to prevent over-reaching and awkward back, shoulder, and wrist postures.
- Lower rinse nozzle in the wash sink to rest at mid-body height to reduce overreaching.
- Limit size of dirty dish containers to reduce the amount of dirty dishes that can be stacked and carried at one time. If possible, carts should be provided to put dirty dish containers on, to decrease the distance that workers have to carry heavy containers. Worker should also be warned not to overfill containers, or they will have to lift and carry excessive weight.

FINAL WORD

The prevention of strains and sprains in a restaurant setting is important for promoting the health and safety of workers, improving productivity, reducing costs, and creating a safer work environment.