

Sprains and strains account for about a third of injuries in construction. These soft tissue injuries are painful, disabling and often accompanied by lengthy recovery periods.

- A **sprain** is the stretching or tearing of ligaments (connect bone to bone).
- A **strain** is the overstretch or tearing of muscles or tendons (connect muscle to bone).

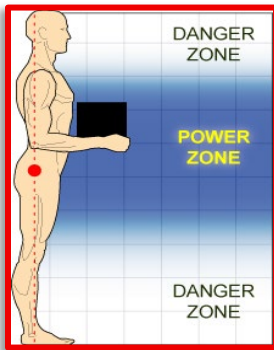
**Prevention starts with planning and proper technique.** Here are some tips for the reduction of sprains and strains:

**Pre-Plan the Job:** Minimize manual material handling hazards such as heavy, repetitive lifting, reaching, and carrying if feasible.

- Use a pallet jack, forklift, or other mechanical aids as the first option.
- **Get help** for anything that could be challenging to lift alone or over 50 lbs.
- Stage materials close to where they will be used and off the ground—preferably at waist height—especially for heavy or frequently used items.



### Use Safe Lifting Techniques



- Plan the lift. Consider the weight, distance to be carried, and your route.
- Don't twist when lifting. Turn the whole body as one unit when changing direction while.
- Keep the load close to the body.
- Work within the “power zone” (between mid-thigh and mid-chest height).
- Grip the load firmly with your hand, not just your fingers.
- Lift with your legs, not your back in a smooth, slow motion, don't jerk.
- Use a wide stance for balance.

### Warm Up Before Physically Demanding Tasks

- Perform light stretches/Warm-up by performing the motions that you will use on the job for a few minutes before full exertion.

### Use the Correct PPE

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as vibration damping gloves and gel knee pads.
- Always wear properly fitting footwear suited to your job.

### Watch Your Step

- Use extra caution when working on slippery surfaces such as ice or wet floors.
- Maintain good housekeeping by keeping work areas clear of clutter.
- Use extra caution when walking across uneven surfaces.
- When stepping off ladders, look where you are placing your feet to avoid missteps.
- Move heavy objects by pushing or pulling. Pushing is always preferable.

