

Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention

It's happened to most of us, an activity that ends in a slip, trip or fall, a stumble down a stairway, a trip over an uneven surface or slipping on the wet surface. It can lead to a variety of regrettable events ranging from a near miss, a simple bruised shin to a serious injury or even death. These are just few situations that set the stage for slips, trips and falls in the workplace. Slips, trips, and falls are the leading cause of accidents in the work place. You may ask, what's the difference between a slip, trip, or fall? Very little, if you are the victim! The pain is the same, so it really doesn't matter which of the three caused your accident, right? Actually, though, there are some significant differences



Slips often occur when there is too little friction or traction between your feet and the walking surface. The most common causes of slips are wet slippery surfaces from weather hazards, spills or poor tread on footwear. Preventive measures could include but not limited to:

- Wet surfaces: Shorten your stride, walk with feet pointed out slightly, and make wider turns.
- Spills: Clean up immediately. If unable to clean up immediately, report it or alert others through alerts and signage.
- Weather hazards: Remain aware of surroundings, wear appropriate slip resistant footwear, dry shoes as soon as practical (wet shoes on dry floors are as dangerous as dry shoes on wet floors).
- Poor tread on footwear, or generally poor traction: Wear slip resistant footwear, apply abrasive strips to smooth walking surfaces, post warnings. The shoes we wear can play a big part in preventing falls. Employees are expected to wear footwear appropriate for the duties of their work task.

Trips commonly occur when you foot or leg strikes an object and your momentum throws you for this type of incident:

- Do not allow objects being carried to obstruct your view, use lifting or load shifting aids such as trolleys.
- Ensure you have clear and unobstructed vision through adequate lighting or clean glasses prior to moving.
- Identify and use a clean and clear path such as designated walkways and or plan the route prior to moving.
- Ensure a high level of housekeeping at all times, this includes closing all drawers or cupboards after use.
- Report all identified hazards that are not easily rectified such as uneven or broken pavement, sidewalks, or stairs.

Falls usually take place from one level to another. The most common examples of this type of injury could involve falling down stairs, working from a height, platform or ladder. Preventive measures could include but not limited to:

- Always use approved or appropriate working at heights plant or equipment designed for the task.
- When using ladders, select the proper type and size and use it properly standing no higher than recommended.
- When working at heights and where possible, always use appropriate fall prevention devices designed for the task.
- Ensure three points of contact at all times by using handrails and never rush, run or jump from heights.
- Report all identified hazards that are not easily rectified such as uneven or broken pavement, sidewalks, or handrails.
- Remain aware of surroundings at all times when working around open pits, docks, or embankments and use barriers, signage or bunting to prevent others from entering the area

Ideal weather conditions won't be of any help if you are not watching where you are going! It's human nature to let our guard down from time to time, we can become distracted by random thoughts or multiple activities. Being in a hurry will increase the chances of a slip, trip or fall. Taking shortcuts, not watching where one is going, using a cell phone, carrying materials which obstructs our vision, wearing sunglasses in low-light areas, not using designated walkways and speed are common elements in many on-the-job injuries relating to slips, trips and falls.



There is one more precautionary tip that applies in all these cases, and that is to **PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU ARE DOING**. It's ultimately up to each individual to plan, stay alert and pay attention to what we are doing and where we are going.

Stretch Before You Strain

Stretch before you strain

Before you start the day and do any activities, it's important to stretch your major muscle groups. Do stretches at the beginning of your shift and throughout the shift to give your body a break. A proper warm up increase your heart rate, body temperature and blood supply to improve flexibility, decrease muscle stiffness, soreness and the potential for injury.

Prepare your muscles and joints before you put them to work. It is important to remember:

- Never bounce when stretching
- Keep stretches relaxed, slow and easy
- Hold stretches for 10 - 30 seconds
- Breathe slowly and deeply with each stretch
- Stop any stretches that cause discomfort

WIDE ARM CIRCLES

Target Area: **Shoulders**

Steps:

1. Neutral standing posture, front-to-back stance
2. Move arm (on same side as forward foot) in forward or backward circle
3. Repeat, other arm

TRICEPS STRETCH

Target Area: **Back of Upper Arms**

Steps:

1. Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance
2. Raise one arm overhead, elbow flexed
3. Grasp arm behind elbow, gently press down at an angle toward opposite side of back
4. Repeat, other arm

Tips: Keep head up and chin in. It may be more comfortable to grasp the hand rather than the elbow. If back arches excessively, pelvic tilt to neutral.

SIDE STRETCH

Target Area: **Sides of Abdomen**

Steps:

1. Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance
2. Raise one arm overhead, elbow in line with ear, opposite hand on hip
3. Reach up and over toward opposite side of the body; reach for something just over the opposite shoulder
4. Repeat, other side

Tip: Don't bend sideways at the waist; instead, reach up and over your head while pushing out on the side of your abdomen.

CAT STRETCH

Target Area: **Lower Back**

Steps:

1. Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance
2. Lower your body while sliding hands down thighs almost to knees
3. Keep back neutral to maintain natural curve of spine
4. Pelvic tilt to stretch lower back
5. Push out on upper back, curl shoulders forward, like a stretching cat

Tip: Feels great after long periods of standing!

UPPER TORSO STRETCH

Target Area: **Upper Back, Back of Shoulders, Arms, Hands, Wrists, Fingers**

Steps:

1. Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance
2. Interlace fingers, palms out
3. Raise arms to shoulder level
4. Curl shoulders forward, push out on upper back and stretch through arms and fingers

HEAD DROPS

Target Area: **Neck**

Steps:

1. Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance
2. Gently tilt head to one side, keeping ear aligned with shoulder
3. Return head to neutral position
4. Repeat, other side

*Thanks to NN Occupational Health for letting our Maxima use of their Work Stretching Program

Pinch Point at Work



When you think of the word pinch, would you automatically think of it as something that could cause a disabling injury to your hands, toes, or body? At work, pinch points are those situations where machines, hand tools, and conditions put our hands, feet, and sometimes our entire body in danger. An injury can come from something as small as a pair of pliers, or as large as an excavator. Most tools, equipment or materials have, or can cause pinch point injuries. It might surprise you to know that hand injuries alone account for one third of the millions of disabling on-the-job accidents occurring each year.

"So how do we protect ourselves and our fellow workers from pinch points"? There are three major things we can do - they are awareness, physical barriers and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Awareness- All around us there are things that can cause us to become injured by pinch points (from placement of hands, feet or whole body, tool usage, material handling, etc.). Many cannot be totally prevented, but if you are constantly alert you can protect yourself from injury. Awareness comes in two forms, a common sense alertness of the right thing to do, where to place your body during the task and training in the correct way to do things and how to use, handle or work around plant, equipment or materials. Common pinch points which expose you to unpreventable potential injury should, where possible be clearly identified through decals similar to the above label. Other methods could include induction and training in task procedure or safe work method training.

Physical Barriers- In areas where we use tools, equipment, plant or materials, physical barriers might be anything from the machine guarding on your table saw to barricades, signage or warning devices on a piece of plant being operated. Barriers or guards are important to protect you from direct contact with moving parts, flying materials, kickbacks, and splashing of harmful liquids. Physical barriers such as temporary or even permanent fencing are there to protect you from injury, not prohibit your activity. Barricades are placed at construction sites to warn you of dangerous situations. It takes knowledge and insight to properly prepare plant or equipment for maintenance, usage or storage. Lockouts, blocks and or safety systems are used to prevent equipment from rolling, turning on or heavy parts from falling during service / maintenance. Never remove them unless you know why they are there, and the reason for being there is completed. Always check for fellow workers who could be in harm's way before removing locks and re-starting operation.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)- Respecting and using physical barriers and being aware of your surroundings are only half of what you need to do to be safe. Make sure you are always wearing your safety gear and inspect it before each use. Although PPE is the last line of defence against a pinch point injury, (proper gloves, footwear), it is a necessity to ensure you are protected.



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