



## PREVENTING BACK INJURIES

Our bodies are hard-wired to protect themselves, therefore our brains are looking for every opportunity to conserve energy. One of the easiest ways to conserve energy is to bend at the hips instead of squatting or bending at the knees. Unfortunately, this generates large forces on the discs in the back. Add the weight of a box, wet towels, luggage, or a tool bag, and the shock absorber in the back can finally “give up”.

Activities that you would perform naturally before a back injury become tough tasks after a back injury. Walking, sitting, standing up, twisting, reaching, and even walking to the bathroom after a back injury can become embarrassing events that may lead to needing the help of others. The good news is that a back injury and reliance on a care giver can be prevented by tricking your brain to use good lifting techniques. And committing to five small health strategies daily can help you revitalize your back and enjoy your time away from work.

### WAYS TO PROTECT AND REVITALIZE YOUR BACK

- + Place two sequential walk-off mats from the exterior door into the lobby during snowy or rainy days and extra scheduled public areas staff to monitor floors during check-in and checkout hours.
- + Use Wet Floor signs with built-in battery powered blowers to hasten floor drying or signs with air blowers placed on the edge of the walkway.
- + Use a “clean mop” for front of the house restaurant use, and a second mop for back of the house use.
- + Place mats in front of self-serve drink stations.
- + Schedule cleaning public area floors to low traffic time in the early afternoon.
- + Use soap dispensers/dilution units to prevent unnecessary soap build up on floors.
- + Immediately barricade spills or water on the floor, and radio for assistance to mop floors dry.
- + Help guests to move their luggage out of the walkway or load it on carts.
- + Report to Engineering tears or bubbles in carpets and loose edges on stair treads.
- + Ensure employees wear non-slip footwear, with oil-resistant soles in good condition.

## DECISION POINT: WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU OBSERVED...

Observation	Action
Towels on the floor of the guest room bathroom.	Use your long handle floor tool to push the towels together in a pile near the stool, then use the stool lid to support your weight (build a bridge) to aid in picking up the towels.
Full trash bins in the guestroom.	Place a hand on the desk or counter to support your weight while you bend over to pick up the trash. Kick one foot up behind you as a counterweight.
Luggage in the entry lobby, blocking a walkway.	Get close to the luggage, flex your knees and lift with your legs, keeping your torso upright.
New chlorine buckets to be transported to the pool room.	Use a staggered stance to put the bucket between your feet, bend your knees and lift with your legs, keeping your torso upright. Step and place the bucket on the luggage cart instead of twisting.
Food delivery boxes stacked in the hallway.	Get a cart or dolly, and only load 2-3 boxes on the cart. Move them into dry storage. Bend your knees and hug the boxes closer to the floor. Step and carry instead of twisting.
Napkins and trash on the convention room floor.	Look for a table to support your weight, while you bend over to pick up trash.
An open sofa bed ready to be closed.	Get close to the handle, flex your knees, and lift up with your legs not your shoulders. Place a hand ahead of you on the sofa backrest to guide the bed into a closed or folded position.
Dirty laundry piled beneath the laundry chute in the laundry.	Position carts under the chute. If laundry has fallen to the floor, support your weight on the edge of a laundry cart while bending over to lift the laundry.
Wet towels and sheets ready to be moved from the washer to the dryer.	Use a spring bottom cart or flat cart that matches the bottom of the dryer drum and move the wet laundry to the dryer instead of bending and digging out wet laundry from the bottom of a cart.

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