

# *In the Safety Zone*™

*A newsletter dedicated to safety awareness*

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## **The Anatomy of a Back**

***In this issue, our focus is all about the health and safety of our core-THE BACK. It is our center, it supports the entire body. If we take care it, it takes care of us.***

### **Why It Matters.....**

- Eight out of ten people experience back problems at some point in their lives.
- Workers lose an average of 7 workdays a year due to back injuries.
- Improper lifting is the major cause of back injuries both on and off the job.
- Back injuries affect millions each year, costs billions in medical bills, lost wages and insurance claims. It also affects quality of life.

The back may appear solid and strong but, in fact, it's built of many intricate and delicate parts ... some 33 vertebrae, 300 muscles, various types of connective tissue, and 30 cushioning pads, called discs, that ease movement of bone against bone as we bend, rise, twist, and turn. Displacement of one of these cushions- the often talked about "slipped" disc-lets the bones grind on nerves, creating back pain.

**Strain vs. Sprain.** These terms are often used interchangeably but they're not the same. A *strain* is the overuse of a muscle. A *sprain* is a tear of connective tissues such as ligaments. Both of these injuries tend to develop over time. The more improper use of the back continues, the more chance they'll appear. Rest and conservative treatments usually cure them.

**Posture Counts.** Because the back's structures weigh on each other, all must be in proper alignment so that weight flows downward as it should. Slouching or slumping when standing, walking, or sitting disturbs that alignment over time, often causing injury.

**Learning to Lift.** Many back injuries happen while attempting to lift or manually move loads. Here are some key guidelines for lifting:

**--Use proper body mechanics in lifting.** That means letting your legs, not your back, do the work. Stand feet apart, close to the load, bend the knees, grasp the object close to the body, and lift upwards from the legs and buttocks. Never simply bend over to start

**--Plan the lift in advance.** Know the load's weight (call for help when it's too heavy for one person), plan the route to the new location to avoid obstacles, and be sure there's room to place the load when you get there. The shortest route may not be the best route.

**--Unload properly.** Face the spot you've chosen and lower the load slowly, again bending your knees while keeping your back straight, until the weight of the load rests on the ground. Then slide it into its final location.

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### **Did You Know.....**

*That five major sections make up the back: **Cervical, Thoracic, Lumbar, Sacrum and the Coccyx.** The cervical area has seven vertebrae, referred to as C1-C7. There are 12 thoracic vertebrae (T1-T12), five lumbar vertebrae (L1-L5), two sacral (S1-S2) and the coccyx, which is comprised of one thick bone and several little supporting bones. It is commonly known as the tailbone.*

## Low back pain: Exercises to reduce pain

**Low back pain** is very common among adults and is often caused by overuse and muscle strain or injury. Treatment can help you stay as active as possible, and it will help you understand that some continued or repeated back pain is not surprising or dangerous.

Most low back pain can get better if you stay active, avoid positions and activities that may increase or cause back pain, use ice, and take nonprescription pain relievers when you need them.

When you no longer have acute pain, you may be ready for gentle strengthening exercises for your stomach, back, and legs, and perhaps for some stretching exercises. Exercise may not only help decrease low back pain, but it may also help you recover faster, prevent re-injury to your back, and reduce the risk of disability from back pain.

Exercises to reduce low back pain are not complicated and can be done at home without any special equipment.

It's important that you don't let fear of pain keep you from trying gentle activity. You should try to be active soon after noticing pain, and gradually increase your activity level.<sup>1</sup> Too little activity can lead to loss of flexibility, strength, and endurance, and then to more pain.

Exercises that may help reduce or prevent low back pain include:

**Aerobic exercise**, to condition your heart and other muscles, maintain health, and speed recovery.

**Strengthening exercises**, focusing on your back, stomach, and leg muscles.

**Stretching exercises**, to keep your muscles and other supporting tissues flexible and less prone to injury.

Some exercises can aggravate back pain. If you have low back pain, avoid:

Straight leg sit-ups.

Bent leg sit-ups or partial sit-ups (curl-ups) when you have acute back pain.

Lifting both legs while lying on your back (leg lifts).

Lifting heavy weights above the waist (standing military press or bicep curls).

Toe touches while standing.

You should always follow the advice of your doctor if you are being actively treated for back pain.




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### Forklift Safety-Quiz Answers from Issue 3

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|--|---|---|
| 1. OSHA allows anyone with a good driving record to operate a forklift.  | T | F |
| 2. A poorly operated forklift might: a. tip or fall over b. drop a load c. collide d. all can happen           |   |   |
| 3. Forklift operators don't have to use seatbelts or obey speed limits and traffic signals.                    | T | F |
| 4. Forklift operators can transport others around a plant or area.   | T | F |
| 5. A forklift load should be stable, centered and within the forklift's rated capacity.                        | T | F |
| 6. Forklifts should carry their loads tilted back and low.   | T | F |
| 7. You can use the forklift's overhead guard to carry materials.   | T | F |
| 8. Dockboard and bridgeplate load capacities don't apply to forklifts.   | T | F |
| 9. A forklift can be left with the keys in and power on if the operator will not be away long.                 | T | F |
| 10. Forklift trucks must be refueled or recharged in assigned, ventilated areas that have no ignition sources. | T | F |
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## TFI Safe Driver Incentive Program

### **Our Backs and Lifting.....Take the quiz and qualify to win a \$50 gift card!**

1. Let your legs, not your back, do the work of lifting. T    F
2. How many people experience back pain at some in their lives? a.1 in 10 b. 5 in 10 c. 8 in 10
3. The back bears most of the body's weight.. T    F
4. Extra weight puts added stress on the back. T    F
5. If you slouch, your muscles must work harder. T    F
6. Carrying loads close to your body puts less strain on your back . T    F
7. Poor physical condition, poor posture, stress and overdoing all contribute to back injuries. T    F
8. Lifting, both at work and home, can contribute to back injuries. T    F
9. Frequent bending and lifting make you less likely to suffer a back injury. T    F
10. Which type of exercise can help strengthen lifting muscles and help prevent a back injury?.  
 a. Bench presses    b. Crunches    c. Jumping jacks

To qualify for the drawing, complete the quiz and return it via fax, email or mailing. Refer to details regarding driver qualifications in the March newsletter or contact the Corporate office at 703-838-5580. All mailings should be addressed to : TransForce, Inc, 6551 Loisdale Ct, Ste., 801 Springfield, VA 22150 Attn: Safety. Email: [safety@transforce.com](mailto:safety@transforce.com); fax: 703-838-5585 Attn: safety. All entries must be postmarked or received by October 24, 2008.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Branch: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Below are the winners from Safety Quiz in Issue 3! Congratulations to all of you !**

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Driver Name</u>	<u>Branch</u>	<u>Driver Name</u>
PIT	Diaz, Fernando	KAN	Cummins, Stephen M
DET	Wathel, Kenneth	ALX	Westmoreland, Christopher
DET	Ratke, John	ALX	Ryan, Wallace A
KAN	Parson, Horace	ALX	Brown, Gary
PHX	Colmes, Dennis	ALX	Carter, Dannell
HAR	Miller, Richard	ALX	Miller, Kenneth
CNJ	Cason, Frank	CNJ	Dunphy, Joseph M
DET	McKinney, William	COL	Boyhan, Tommy
CLE	Robinson, Rickie	DAL	Walker, Randy
CNJ	Perrchalski, Gary	ATL	Sheppard, Timothy