

Back Injury Prevention Quick Tips



Protecting the back is one of the most important things a farmer can do to stay productive on the farm. Many injuries/conditions develop over time, so establishing good habits will preserve back health. Keep these best practices in mind:

Lifting or Carrying

- Use help and lighten loads—make more trips
- Know the destination and have a clear path before lifting
- Bend at the knees, not at the back—carry objects close to the body, and rotate body by moving feet
- Use equipment to move items long distances

Working with Livestock

- Have assistance
- Use animal handling equipment (squeeze chutes, handling pens, transportation devices)
- Be careful not to trip over shorter animals (young pigs, etc.)
- Avoid falls from horses

Completing Maintenance/Shop Tasks

- Minimize bending and stooping—position workstations at the proper height
- Store frequently used parts/tools between waist and shoulder height
- Use anti-fatigue mats in areas where you stand for long periods of time
- Use long-handled tools to increase leverage and reduce the need to bend/reach

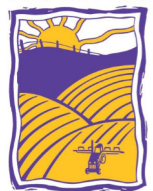
Avoiding Slips, Trips, and Falls

- Practice good housekeeping around the farm
- Complete work at ground level whenever possible
- Maintain three points of contact when climbing
- Ensure that work areas are well-lit
- Wear correct footwear for the job and conditions
- Eliminate distractions
- Use handrails
- Open gates rather than climb over them

Operating Farm Equipment

- Use seating that provides adequate support—and position it to easily reach controls
- Monitor towed implements by using mirrors or camera systems
- Use automatic gate openers and quick hitches
- Step down from equipment rather than jumping off
- Be aware of the effects of whole body vibration

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The National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS)

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