



# Tool Box Talk

## Stretching 101: Construction Workers

December 2011 revised

### THE BACK AND STRETCHING

Our back is one of the strongest anatomical structures of our body. Despite this, about 80% of the population will experience back pain at some stage in their lives<sup>1</sup>.

Before beginning any stretching program, check with your healthcare provider. If you question any of the following stretches, or feel any discomfort while doing any of these stretches, stop doing the stretch(es) immediately and check with your healthcare provider before continuing.

Many parts of your job are physically demanding and may lead to discomfort. Done consistently, these stretches can compensate for awkward positions (such as working overhead or bend over), maintain or increase flexibility, and improve circulation.

Stretch before and during your workday. Stretch **s-l-o-w-l-y** and gently, don't bounce and don't hold your breath. Hold each stretch 3-5 seconds. And don't forget to do both right and left sides.



#### Chest and Shoulder Stretch

- Standing up straight, raise your arms with your elbows bent so your upper arms are parallel to the floor, fingers pointing up.
- **S-l-o-w-l-y** squeeze your shoulder blades together and hold for 3-5

A well designed pre-job stretching program can help reduce both the number and costs associated with these injuries.



#### Side bend

- Feet shoulder width apart, arms at side.
- With one hand, reach up overhead and **s-l-o-w-l-y** lean towards opposite side. Keep both feet flat on ground.
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.

In the Saskatchewan construction industry, an average of 890 workers per year receive an injury due to bodily reaction and exertion and cost the industry an average of 5.1 million dollars per year



#### Quadriceps Stretch

- Holding on for balance with your left hand, grab your right foot or ankle with your right hand.
- Hold for 3-5 seconds and feel the pull in the front of your thigh.
- Repeat on opposite side.
- Do each leg twice.



#### Hamstring Stretch

- Raise your foot on an elevated surface, at least 10" to 12" high. A truck's running board works, as well as a bucket.
- Looking forward, **s-l-o-w-l-y** bend at the hip keeping raised leg straight.
- Stop when you feel tension and hold 3-5 seconds.

1. Back Talk: An Owner's Manual for Backs. WorkSafe BC, 2011  
Illustrations courtesy of State Compensation Insurance Fund.

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## How To Use This Resource

When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.



One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks. Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

**For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks](http://www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks)**

**For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool\\_Box\\_Meeting.pdf](http://www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf)**

## ABOUT THE SASKATCHEWAN CONSTRUCTION SAFETY ASSOCIATION

*The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, non-profit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.*