

What's Causing Your Backache?

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Because the back bears most of your body weight, it's vulnerable to strain and injury. It's easy to hurt your back when you lift or overdo activities or sit too long, especially if the muscles supporting your back are weak

The primary risk factors include a sedentary lifestyle, arthritis, obesity and smoking. Back pain may directly result from standing or sitting for long periods, ongoing strenuous labor, twisting, overstretching or overlifting.

The sources of low back (lumbar) pain can be the spinal discs between the vertebrae, the ligaments around the spine and the spinal cord and nerves, and the lower back muscles.

Sooner or later we all are subject to back pain. Chronic lower back pain, lasting more than 12 weeks, is the leading cause of disability. Fortunately, we're learning more about how to prevent and treat it.

In 2017, the American College of Physicians published their clinical practice guidelines for treating chronic low back pain (not due to damaged spinal nerves). They emphasize replacing prescription drug therapy with physical and mindfulnessbased therapies, including: **Physical therapy; Muscle-strengthening exercise; Acupuncture; Stress reduction; Meditation, tai chi and yoga; Progressive muscle relaxation and biofeedback.**

The interventions listed above have been shown to help patients shift their focus from pain and disability to being more functional despite residual pain. With practice, patients have found that mindfulness treatments such as meditation can produce a non-narcotic, pain-free effect.

To help reduce your everyday backache:

- ✓ Maintain good posture, especially while sitting.
- ✓ Sit less. Get up and move about frequently.
- ✓ Do low-impact cardio exercise to improve circulation and strength.
- ✓ Strengthen your core muscles.
- ✓ Lose excess weight, especially abdominal fat.
- ✓ Let your strong leg muscles power the effort of lifting or climbing.

Most doctors now encourage back pain sufferers to stay active and routinely move their backs and related muscles to ease everyday tension and pain — provided it's the right kind of movement. Ask your health care provider to recommend a suitable workout for you — and your back.



Fuel Saving Tips for All Drivers

At a time when fuel prices are skyrocketing and there is a perennial shortage of gasoline across the globe, it becomes imperative that everyone do their bit in reducing the use of fuel. Making the most of the gas you put in your vehicle is one way of ensuring that you achieve the best possible fuel economy. Being economical about fuel will help save money, reduce oil dependence costs, reduce climate changes, and increase energy sustainability. Various government and non-government agencies have come up with valuable fuel economy tips for drivers. These fuel saving tips will show you how to improve MPG while minimizing damage to the environment.

At the Gas Station

It is always best to fill up your vehicle with gas early in the morning. While pumping gas, be sure to do so at a low setting to minimize the vapors. At high speeds there will be more vapors and you will be filling your tank with lesser gas as a result. Never wait till the tank is fully empty before you stop for gas. The fuller the gas tank is, the better will be the fuel mileage. Also remember not to fill up your gas tank soon after the ground tanks at the station have been replenished. The process causes dirt at the bottom of the tanks to rise to the surface and this can cut down fuel efficiency significantly.

Know Your Vehicle

Ensure that the gas you use has the right octane level recommended for your vehicle to help improve fuel economy. Most cars use regular octane gas and higher octane gas is not required unless the engine is knocking. Tuning the engine regularly and changing the oil frequently can help you get better mileage. The tires must also be checked to ensure that they are adequately inflated and appropriately aligned. This has been found to help increase gas mileage by about 3%. One fact that is not very commonly known is that keeping the trunk light also contributes to fuel economy. Similarly, a loaded roof can cut down mileage by about 5%.

Drive Responsibly

Some fuel economy tips are related to how and where you drive your vehicle. Driving within the posted speed limits, avoiding unnecessary idling, using cruise control wherever possible and preventing sudden stops and starts can all help you improve fuel economy. It is also fuel-efficient to switch off the air conditioner once in a while and to let in the breeze especially when travelling outside the city limits. Try and avoid rush hour traffic by either leaving early or working remotely a couple of times a week. A lot of gas is wasted when people wait in traffic.

Minimize Vehicle Use

By combining together two or more errands you can not just get your work done faster, you will also cut down on the fuel used. Carpooling, walking or biking when the distance to be traveled is short are some other simple fuel saving tips that can be implemented as often as possible. Avoiding rush hour traffic and using public transport, are some other fuel economy tips to keep in mind. Switching off the vehicle's engine while travelling downhill is also one of the fuel saving tips you can choose to remember, although many states have laws against coasting so check with your local DMV before trying this tip.

Fuel Efficiency for Truck Drivers

Fuel makes up about 25 percent of the operating cost of a fleet and thus, saving even 2 or 3 percent in fuel costs of one truck can make a significant difference. As with other types of vehicles, the condition of the truck, the type of traffic encountered, and the weather will all be crucial in determining the amount of fuel being consumed. The truck or semi must be frequently checked and regular maintenance carried out to help improve fuel economy. Controlling engine speed is also one of the fuel economy tips suggested to commercial drivers.

Clay Cormier
DOT Safety Manager

Sleep Issues During Pandemic



Keeping up with the news these days can be extra anxiety-inducing with COVID-19 and government stay at home orders dominating the headlines. The rising number of cases, risk, and the economy is hard to get off our minds. It's understandable that these thoughts could keep our minds wired at night, preventing us from being able to fall asleep or get a good quality sleep the whole night through.

What Can We Do?

- **Try to keep a consistent daytime routine and consistent sleep schedule.** Go to bed at the same time every night and wake at the same time every day.
- **Get outside for some fresh air during light hours.** Perhaps take a walk. Exposing yourself to as much light as possible during day hours and avoiding bright light during dark hours helps with the sleep cycle. Being outside is also great for mental health.
- **Get some exercise in the morning or afternoon.** Exercising earlier in the day (at least 3 hours before bedtime) allows your body to go into a deeper sleep at night.
- **Remember to wind down before going to bed!** Try spending the last hour before going to bed doing something calming such as bedtime yoga, meditation, prayer, relaxing music, read a book, take a hot bath, drink herbal tea with no caffeine.

What to Avoid

- **Large quantities of alcohol.** Especially near bedtime. Alcohol can really interrupt your sleep and while it may help you fall asleep, you will not get a good quality deep sleep if you drank too much.
- **Too much stimulation at night - especially visual stimulation.** TV, cell phone, computer, social media, etc. If you are going to watch TV before bedtime - don't watch it IN bed and be sure to watch something easy-going.
- **Do not exercise right before bedtime.**
- **Do not consume caffeine or sugar at night.** Individuals should become very familiar with how their body reacts to caffeine and what time they should stop drinking it. Caffeine can stay in your system for a long time. **Avoid eating a large meal right before bed.** Give your body time to digest.
- **Avoid napping.** Although there are exceptions to this rule. Such as if you'll be operating heavy machinery, driving, or engaging in jobs or activities that make them dangerous to do while tired. In those cases, sleeping in or napping might be necessary.

~~Sweet Dreams Happen Because YOU Were Safe Today~~

Lauren Vincent
Industrial Safety Manager



Birthdays



May Birthdays

Jerry Lanning- 5/2

Kyle Washington- 5/13

Alberto Arteaga- 5/22

George Tanguma- 5/23

Work Anniversaries

May Work Anniversaries

Ahmed Khan- 1 year

Robert Turner- 5 years

Lauren Vincent- 6 years

Shaun Fontenot- 7 years

Larry Domingue- 10 years

Clean DOT Inspections

No Clean DOT Inspections received in April.

What did you learn?

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. The American College of Physicians emphasize replacing prescription drug therapy with physical and mindfulnessbased therapies, list 2 of their recommendations.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

2. What percentage can a loader roof lower your miles per gallon (MPG)?
 - a. 1%
 - b. 3%
 - c. 5%
 - d. 10%

3. List 2 things that you should avoid if you are having trouble sleeping.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

4. List 2 things you can do to try and improve or quality of sleep.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

If you return this portion completed to the Safety Department by May 31st, you will be entered into a drawing for 2- \$25.00 gift cards. Good Luck!