LOW-BACK PAIN IS A LEADING CAUSE OF JOB-RELATED DISABILITY AND MISSED
WORK IN THE UNITED STATES. THE PAIN IS SO UNBEARABLE THAT AMERICANS
SPEND MORE THAN $50 BILLION PER YEAR IN AN EFFORT TO MAKE IT GO AWAY.
IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING WORK-RELATED BACK PAIN, HERE ARE SOME BACK-
PROTECTING TIPS THAT MAY BRING YOU RELIEF:

1. **Lift wisely.** Take your time, get help when needed, use lifting devices, and
   alternate heavy lifting with less physically demanding tasks. Follow the
   rules of good posture while lifting:
   • Place feet at least shoulder-width apart.
   • Stand as close as possible to the object being lifted.
   • Hold the object as close to your body as you can.
   • Avoid twisting or bending forward when lifting and carrying.
   • Bend at the knees instead of the waist.
   • Tighten your stomach muscles when lifting and lowering.

2. **Avoid prolonged sitting and standing.** Walk and stretch hourly if possible.
   • For sitters: Place a rolled towel, small pillow or a specially designed
     seat support behind your lower back.
   • For standers: Distribute weight evenly on both feet.

3. **Sit with good form.** Align ears with the shoulders and keep chin parallel
   to the floor. Avoid leaning to one side and bend at the hips instead of
   rounding shoulders when leaning forward. Choose a supportive swivel
   chair with the following features:
   • Adjustable seat and arm rests
   • An adjustable back rest with a spring that moves with you
   • A seat that tilts forward

4. **Modify your workspace to fit your needs.**
   • Place your computer and other frequently used objects close to you.
   • Avoid neck pain by using a headset or special phone adapter
     for phone calls.

5. **Make your health a priority.** This is an important, commonly overlooked
   way to reduce your risk for back pain.
   • **Lose a modest amount of weight.** Even a small loss of 5–10% of your
     current body weight decreases stress on the muscles, ligaments, and
     joints in the back.
   • **Quit smoking.** It's true, kicking the habit for good will help your back
     feel better.

6. **Exercise regularly.** This is more effective than bed rest in helping to
   relieve and prevent chronic low-back pain. A quality exercise program
   includes aerobic activity, strength training, and stretching.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**
- American Council on Exercise
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
- Medline Plus
- American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons