



Preventing Shoulder Injuries

As a parcel delivery driver, you need your shoulders to be injury-free to do your job. However, the reality is the bones, joints and ligaments of the shoulder are prone to injury when not used properly. Shoulder injuries can result from a singular event or they can result of a repetitive stress, such as improper lifting. While back injuries are the most frequently reported on-the job injury, shoulder injuries tend to keep people out of work the longest nearly twice as long as back injuries. Shoulder injuries simply they take longer to heal. Not only that, but they are also more costly because they often require more extensive treatment than most back injuries.

WARM UP

To prevent shoulder injuries, the first thing that you should do is acknowledge that your job is pretty physical, and that to prevent injuries associated with physical exertion, you should warm-up first. Exercising cold muscles is almost always a recipe for disaster. Shoulder stretches and getting your heart rate up a little activates the synovial fluid which lubricates your joints. Put simply, a good warm-up is cheap insurance against a shoulder injury that could have very long-term damage.

INCREASE SHOULDER STRENGTH

Another way to prevent shoulder injuries is increase your shoulder strength. Doing exercises to strengthen your shoulder can help stabilize the shoulder joint and help prevent painful injuries. You can certainly Google exercises for strengthening shoulders, but always speak to your doctor before beginning a strengthening program, as your doctor can help determine which exercises are best for you.

SLEEP POSITION

We spend roughly one-third of our lives sleeping — or attempting to sleep. Your sleep position matters more than you might think. So, it makes sense to consider your sleep position. The reality is that shoulder muscles and tendons can become strained by laying in one position for a long time (like for a whole night of sleep). If you are someone who sleeps on their side, try sleeping on your back. Not only does it prevent stress on your shoulders, it protects your spine, and can also help relieve hip and knee pain.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

Before lifting a package or other object, consider its weight and the distance it will be moved. If it is too heavy, awkward, or bulky for one person to lift safely, use a two-person lift or a material handling aid, such as a cart or dolly, or divide the load into several trips.

Although you may be in a hurry when grabbing a package, take the time to test the weight. A small package does not necessarily mean that the package is lightweight. If you have ever made that mistake before, you know that it can lead to a shoulder strain.

When carrying heavy items, keep them as close to your body as possible. Doing that not only puts less strain on your back but also puts less stress on your shoulders.

CARING FOR SHOULDER INJURIES

Despite your best effort, shoulder injuries can still happen. The most important thing to do is listen to what your body is telling you. Do not ignore pain and “push through” shoulder injuries. That could aggravate the condition and possibly result in further problems. Instead, report shoulder injuries and other injuries as soon as possible. Early injury reporting is critical to receiving the best possible treatment and care for the injury.

REST

Like any other muscle group in the body, your shoulder needs time to rest and recover. If you notice pain while doing a certain activity rest your shoulder. Resting your shoulder does not mean giving up all shoulder movement, however. Doing that can result in a stiff shoulder from lack of use. Even mild stretches can help keep your shoulder moving while it recovers.