

# Back Injury Prevention

## What is a Strain?

A **strain** is an injury to a muscle or tendon. Muscles move your skeleton. When a muscle contracts, it pulls on a tendon, which then moves your skeleton.

Muscles are made to stretch. However, if muscles are stretched too far, or stretched while contracting, a strain may occur. A strain can either be a stretching or tearing of the muscle or tendon.



## Common Types of Injuries

Simple strains are the most common cause of back pain, especially lower back pain. Muscle strain is often caused by overuse or overloading of a muscle. The risk of this is increased with repetitive movements.

If your job doesn't involve much movement and you think you're safe from back muscle strains, think again! Strains can be caused by holding a muscle contraction for too long, which can happen even at your desk.

## Symptoms of Back Muscle Strain

Symptoms of pulled-back muscles include back pain, muscle weakness, and back muscle spasms. The back pain may be sudden, but usually comes on gradually. With any injury, report it to your supervisor and seek medical direction.

## Back Strain Prevention

Many people who experience recurring back pain have weak core muscles—muscles that support the back. Strengthening these muscles can prevent back strain from reoccurring, though strength exercises should be utilized after the back pain has already been resolved.

Back strains are often preventable with proper posture habits, warm-up exercises, proper lifting techniques, and back exercises.