



# Safety Tips

A five-minute training series for PCOs.



## Stretching Helps Prevent Sprains & Strains

Materials handling jobs require bending, lifting, pushing, pulling, twisting and carrying items. Sometimes these activities, when not performed properly or when the person is not physically prepared, cause injuries in the form of sprains and strains. Often these types of injuries can be avoided by simply stretching for a moment a few times a day.

To compound our problem, we sit in a vehicle a great deal of time, permitting our back and leg muscles to draw up and become tight. The leg muscles are the strongest part of our body and can hold a drawn up position longer and stronger than most all other muscles. Therefore, the other muscles, such as the back, give out first. To prevent this from happening, stretch for a few moments a few times a day. This can lessen the probability of a back, arm or shoulder injury.

Watch your pets when they first get up in the morning. The first thing they will do is stretch. A few minutes of stretching when you first get up in the morning will go a long way toward preventing muscle strains.

Simple stretching exercises listed below can provide a safety margin for sprains and strains.

- First stretch the muscles in the back of the legs by placing your hands on an object, such as your vehicle. With one leg in vertical standing position, step back with the other leg and place your foot flat on the floor. See the picture above. Hold this position for a few moments. This will stretch the back of the leg. Now repeat this process with the other leg.
- Next, slowly bend over and come as close as you can to touching your toes without straining your back. Keep your legs straight. Hold this position for a few moments.
- Stretch your arms over your head as far as you can and hold this position for a few seconds.

Repeat these exercises until you no longer feel stiff and when necessary throughout your day to loosen back up.

**Remember:** When lifting an object, do not stretch to lift the object. This type of stretching strains the muscles.

**Sprains & strains are our number one cause of accidents so far this year!**