

Adult Family Home Industry Worker Safety Awareness Program

Module 4: Washington State Information on

Sprains & Strains (Ergonomics)

**Washington State L&I
Requirements & Information Under the
Washington State Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA)**

Adult Family Home Industry Worker Safety Awareness Program

Funding and support for this project has been provided by the state of Washington, Department of Labor & Industries, Safety & Health Investment Projects.

The Adult Family Home Council is solely responsible for the content of and views expressed in this report and related materials unless they have been formally endorsed by the Washington state Department of Labor & Industries.

These documents do not replace any standard or regulation and create no new legal obligations. They are advisory in nature, informational in content, and are intended to assist employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace.

Purpose Of The Safety Awareness Program

- Assist Adult Family Home Industry employers, supervisors, and all workers in recognizing key safety hazards in their work environment and help them avoid and control these hazards
- Outcome: Create a safer work environment and significantly reduce injuries in Adult Family Homes



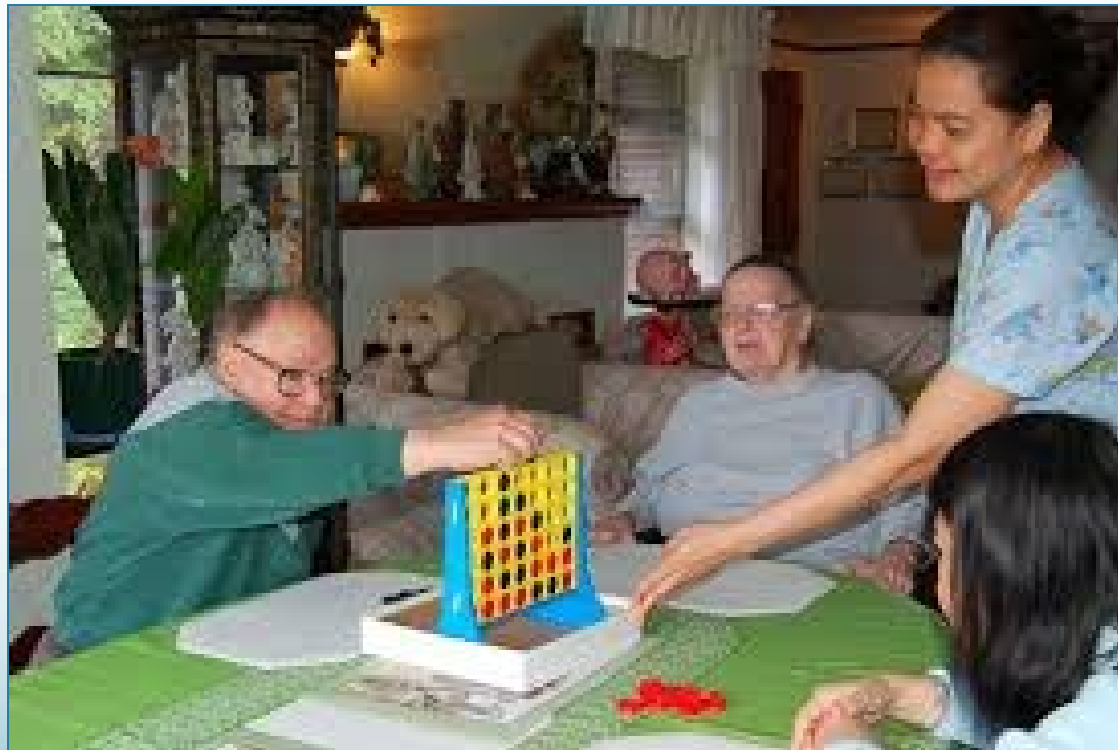


Course Objectives

Sprains & Strains (Ergonomics)

- Learn how to prevent sprains and strains
 - ❖ Avoid heavy lifting & store items off the floor
 - ❖ Use wheelchairs & other rolling carts & devices for moving residents or heavy objects
 - ❖ Change up your movements & reduce risky tasks to avoid fatigue & injuries
- Avoid more than 35 pounds of lift effort
- Learn about resources for getting help in preventing sprains & sprains through training or from L&I consultants

Module 4: Sprains & Strains (Ergonomics)





What are the biggest causes of sprain & strain injuries in adult family homes?

What are the best ways to prevent injuries from sprains & strains?



Sprains & Strains Biggest Cause of Adult Family Home Injuries



- Over 5,000 injuries in Washington from 2011-2017
- There are no specific Washington state laws or rules related to sprains & strains, lifting, or ergonomics
 - ❖ Except as an [accommodation for pregnant workers](#)
- All employers in Washington must still meet the general requirement to keep their workplace free from recognized hazards found in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) [Safety Core Rules](#)
- Preventing sprains & strains is critical because they are a top cause of injuries, missed work time, and costs for adult family homes

Recommendations for Preventing Sprains & Strains 1

❖ Avoid heavy lifting

- ❑ Use mechanical lifting devices such as Hoyer lifts, standing assist devices, etc., to help avoid injuries



❖ Store items off the floor

- ❑ Lifting from the floor doubles your risk of back injury compared to lifting at waist level

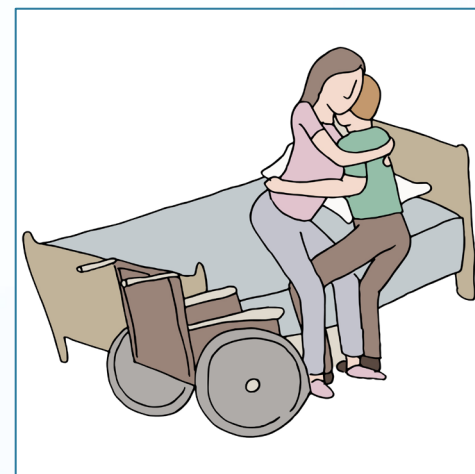


Recommendations for Preventing Sprains & Strains 2



- **Keep it close**

- ❖ Shorter reaches when assisting residents or when getting tools, materials, & supplies means less strain on your arms, shoulders, & back



- **Grip, don't pinch**

- ❖ Gripping with the whole hand uses stronger muscles than pinching with your fingers. This means less strain on your hands and fingers



- **Keep wrists straight**

- ❖ You have more grip strength, and you'll feel less strain on your hands and wrists

Recommendations for Preventing Sprains & Strains 3



- The following can help reduce or eliminate sprains & strains in your adult family home

❖ Roll it

- ☐ Use geri chairs, Hoyer lifts, wheelchairs, etc., instead of carrying residents. Use carts or hand trucks for moving heavy objects. Carrying is hard on your hands, arms, & back and can make a slip or trip more likely

❖ Push, don't pull

- ☐ Pushing lets you use your body weight & larger muscles to move a load

❖ Work at waist height

- ☐ Too much bending, kneeling, & squatting puts strain on your back, knees, & hips



L&I Recommendations for Preventing Sprains & Strains 4



- **Match work height to the task**

- ❖ Set your work a little below elbow height when you must use more force
- ❖ Set your work a little above elbow height when the task needs a light touch and a better view



- **Keep a level head**

- ❖ Tipping, tilting, or twisting your head to see your work puts strain on your neck & shoulders



- **Change it up**

- ❖ Moving the same way over and over for a long time can lead to fatigue, mistakes, & injury. Reduce how often and how long risky tasks are done



L&I Recommends No More Than 35 Pounds of Lift Effort



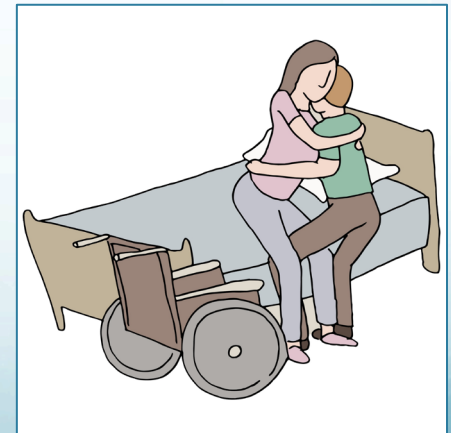
- What is 35 pounds of lift effort?

❖ Compare:

- The effort you need to lift or transfer a 35-pound box or sack from a chair or bed

To

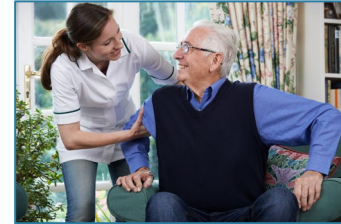
- The effort needed to lift or transfer a person



Lifting & Transfer Considerations



- To what extent can the person help lift or transfer themselves?
 - ❖ A resident who is fully or mostly able to support themselves (with very little or no help) may not need lift equipment for safe transfer, except possibly a standing aid or slide board
 - ❖ Partly able residents who can use some leg & arm strength may need a sit-to-stand lift or multiple caregivers if the transfer effort is over 35 pounds
 - ❖ Residents whose legs are weak or who cannot stand or support much body weight likely need a Hoyer lift or other total body lift to be transferred safely
- Resident handling in less-than-ideal conditions, such as lifting from the floor, while bending over, reaching out, or in tight spaces, should be done with lift equipment



Sprains & Strains (Ergonomics)

Quiz Question 1



- **True or False: L&I recommends no more than 35 pounds of lift effort when transferring a resident**
 - A. True
 - B. False

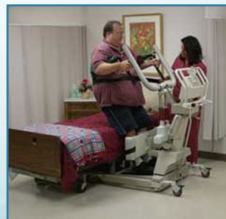
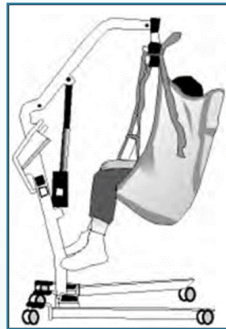
Sprains & Strains (Ergonomics)

Quiz Question 2



- **Which of the following helps to reduce the risk of sprains & strains?**
 - A. Lifting a 140-pound resident from the ground by yourself without any lifting equipment
 - B. Bending over and twisting to transfer a resident from a chair to a wheelchair
 - C. Using a wheelchair to push a resident from the dining room to their bedroom
 - D. All of the above
 - E. None of the above

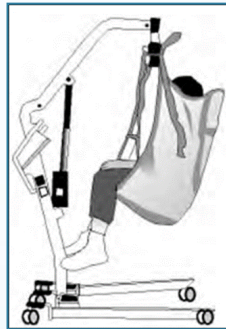
L&I Resources for Preventing Sprains & Strains



- (L&I) provides the following resources to help reduce or eliminate sprains & strains:
 - ❖ Solutions for Sprains & Strains website:
<https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/solutions-for-sprains-strains#simple-solutions>
 - ❖ Client Transfers: Safely Match Abilities with Needs, online training tool: https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/_docs/TransferClientsSafely.pdf
 - ☐ Provides simple instructions, with pictures, to see if you need equipment to help shift, move, or transfer a resident
 - ❖ Sit-To-Stand Devices: An option to transfer patients: https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/_docs/SitToStandDevices.pdf
 - ❖ Total Body Lift Patient Transfer Devices: https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/_docs/TotalBodyLifts.pdf

More Training Resources Available

- You can find additional training resources on preventing sprains & strains on L&I's [ergonomics training website](#)
- L&I consultants can help
 - ❖ Ergonomic specialists can help you find solutions to prevent sprain and strain injuries. These injuries are associated with high worker's compensation costs in the adult family home industry
 - L&I consultants can help you create customized solutions specific to the needs of your home
 - L&I consultations are free of charge
 - Get Help With Ergonomics online training:
<https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/get-help-with-ergonomics>



Request A Consultation



- To request a free & confidential safety consultation, contact Washington state's Department of Labor & Industries' DOSH Consultation Program by:
 - ❖ Calling 360-902-5554
 - ❖ Going to L&I's Request Consultation webpage: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/request-consultation/>
- If you disagree with the results of a consultation, ask to speak to the consultant's supervisor to request a review

Consultation Services (No-fee assistance)

*Helping you find and fix safety
and health hazards*



Overwhelmed or confused by safety
and health regulations? Concerned
about workers' compensation costs?
Our professional consultants can
help you find solutions.

 Washington State Department of
Labor & Industries
Division of Occupational Safety and Health



Questions?



For questions or additional information about these educational materials, contact the Washington state Adult Family Home Council at 1-888-439-8999 or at their [website](#).

Quiz Answers



Sprains & Strains (Ergonomics)

- **Quiz question 1:**
True or False: L&I recommends no more than 35 pounds of lift effort when transferring a resident
 - ❖ A is the correct answer
(True)
- **Quiz question 2:**
Which of the following helps to reduce the risk of sprains & strains?
 - ❖ C is the correct answer
(Using a wheelchair to push a resident from the dining room to their bedroom)