

# Do it yourself Safely



**SUPPORTING**

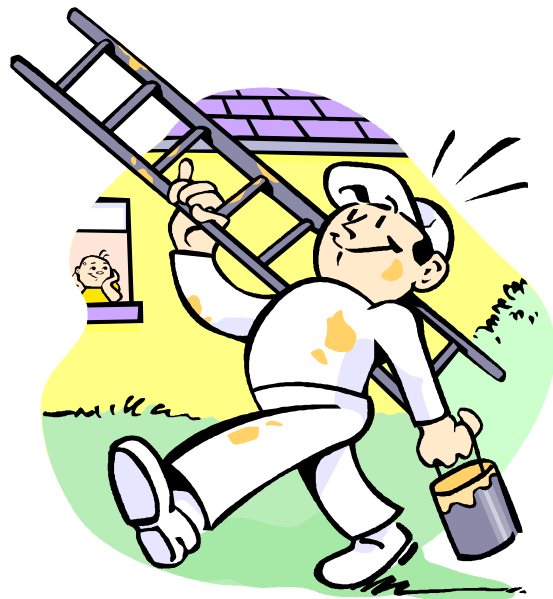


**DIY** not only saves money, it enhances the value of your home. With today's range of modern fitted furniture you can do so much more and get professional results without having to pay someone else!

But if you are like most “**DIYers**”, the tasks you are taking on are likely to be far removed from your normal everyday activities. Failing to remember this simple fact is the main reason why so many **DIY** enthusiasts suffer aches and pains, particularly in their backs.

Back pain is due to the unaccustomed and prolonged stretching of tendons and ligaments in the back. If this strain continues it can lead to a gradual loss of support to the spine and joint wear and tear. Pressure can also increase on the spinal nerves and cause pain elsewhere.

The result is a mild injury, such as a mild ache in the lower back. **DO NOT** work through the ache, it is a sign that something is wrong! If you continue to work then further damage may occur to the soft tissue structures which may give rise to sharper pains. The body's response to this is to lock the affected area by causing the muscles in that region to go into a spasm. This is to try to prevent further injury.



At this point people may consult a Chiropractor saying that “my back just locked up this morning when I got up”. Usually the case history will reveal that the patient has been busy installing that new kitchen at the weekend. Whilst Chiropractors are always available to ease those **DIY** pains, they much prefer that their patients try to prevent injury as much as possible.

So that you can enjoy the fruits of your labour, here are some simple guidelines to help ensure that improving your home does not become a ‘pain in the back’!

**We care about you**

# GENERAL DIY GUIDELINES

## LIFTING AND CARRYING

Always lift heavy weights extremely carefully. Approach them slowly, getting a firm grip and taking the weight with your legs, not your lower back!

Always keep the load close to your body and try not to pivot on your legs but turn the whole body. If you have to move heavy loads, either get help or use a wheelbarrow or trolley. Most DIY centres now sell two wheel trolleys, which are a very good investment if you do a lot of DIY.

## KNEELING

It is always better to kneel on one leg rather than bending down repeatedly from the hips. If you suffer from knee problems or osteoarthritis use a cushion to kneel on. If you must bend, keep the back as hollow as possible.

## WORK BENCH LEVELS

Your work bench should be at a level which will allow you to work without bending forward from the hips. It is wise not to stand in front of your work bench for long periods at a time. When standing, it is much better if you place one foot slightly higher up to take your weight.

## VARYING THE TASK

Working constantly at one task means your movements are repetitive. This is the prime cause of strains and sprains.

If possible, carry out short periods of activity on a variety of jobs rather than slogging away at the same one all day.

## KEEP WARM

Chilled muscles are more easily strained. So keep yourself warm and covered. Wear several layers and take them off as you warm up.

## REST PERIODS

However anxious you are to get the job done, it's sensible to take regular rest periods. A sit down with a cup of tea can make you feel better in the days to come too! Not taking a regular break is as bad for your back as continually working in the same position.

## THE MORNING AFTER

If the next day you find that you ache, rest and recuperate! Should the pain persist, consult us and we will advise whether you should apply ice or heat packs to the area or whether you require treatment.

## REMEMBER :

Be sensible! Take simple precautions and don't work beyond your capacity. If you exercise and keep fit, you'll be much better shape for tackling all those other DIY jobs.

Please give this to a friend or colleague if you think Chiropractic may help them.

Have them call us on 01276 21637

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*We Care About the Community*