

Ways to take the pain out of DIY

DIY, whether you enjoy it or not, can be hard work and involves activities which may put pressure on joints and muscles. There are things you can do to reduce the risk of injuries such as low back or neck strain, which are largely common sense but often forgotten.

These are some tips and reminders to help you minimise problems:

- If you have an existing or recurrent back or neck problem, "warm up" with a few gentle exercises before you begin work. It may sound over the top, but relaxed muscles and joints are less susceptible to injury than those that are tense and stiff.
- Prepare well - make sure you have the right equipment, correct height ladders etc., and you can get into the right position to carry out the task effectively. Do you need help with lifting? Don't just make do.
- Try to vary what you are doing or change your position of work regularly and take breaks. Pace yourself and be realistic about how much work you can deal with in a given time.
- Take extra care when lifting and seek help for heavy or awkward objects. Prepare a path and a space to put your load down if you are moving objects around.

To lift correctly: Keep your back straight and head up
Bend your knees, feet flat on the floor, one foot slightly forward
Get as close to the object as possible
Lift up smoothly and keep the object close to your body if you are carrying it

- If you feel any pain or discomfort, stop immediately.

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