

KUHLEFIT
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Trucker Service Association

LIVE HEALTHY
DRIVER HEALTH CAMPAIGN

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“THE PITFALLS TO TRUCK DRIVING”

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PITFALLS TO TRUCKING



INTRODUCTION

Long-haul trucking (even truckers that return home each day) is a demanding profession that requires drivers to remain seated for extended periods. This sedentary lifestyle contributes to numerous health issues, including chronic back pain, stiffness, poor posture, and musculoskeletal disorders. This profession does not support health in any way. However, by implementing targeted strategies, truck drivers can mitigate these risks and maintain their overall well-being. This month's write-up explores key techniques for preventing back pain, counteracting prolonged sitting, and correcting posture to promote long-term health and efficiency.

PREVENTING LOW BACK PAIN

Back pain is one of the most common complaints among truck drivers due to prolonged sitting, improper posture, and limited physical activity. Implementing proactive strategies can significantly reduce discomfort and prevent chronic issues. Humans, by nature, are meant to be up and moving a large portion of the day. Trucking driving does the complete opposite of this, thus creating many musculoskeletal issues.

BACK PAIN



CAUSES OF BACK PAIN IN TRUCKERS

- Prolonged sitting: Leads to spinal compression and weakened core muscles.
- Poor seat ergonomics: Inadequate lumbar support and seat positioning strain the lower back and creates muscular imbalances.
- Lack of movement: Limited physical activity tightens hip flexors and weakens back muscles.
- Improper lifting techniques: Lifting cargo incorrectly can cause strains and injuries.

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BACK PAIN

1. Adjust Your Seat Position: Ensure your seat supports the natural curve of your spine.
2. Use a Lumbar Support Cushion: Provides additional lower back support to maintain proper spinal alignment.
3. Stretch Before and After Driving: Incorporate stretches targeting the pecs, quadriceps and hip flexors.
4. Strengthen Core Muscles: Exercises like bird dog, dead bugs and bridges help strengthen and stabilize the spine.
5. Use Proper Lifting Techniques: Keep loads close to the body and lift with your legs. Be careful of lifting with an overly flexed spine (rounded spine).

SEDENTARY; THE UNAVOIDABLE



COUNTERACT PROLONGED SITTING

Sitting for extended periods reduces circulation, tightens some muscles, loosens others and increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, and musculoskeletal issues. Truck drivers must incorporate movement throughout their shifts to maintain mobility and overall health. **Movement is an absolute MUST-DO.**

Effects of Prolonged Sitting

- Restricted blood flow: Leads to swelling in the legs and feet.
- Muscle atrophy: Weakens core and lower body muscles, contributing to poor posture and muscle imbalances.
- Increased risk of chronic diseases: Sitting for long periods is linked to obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.
- Weight gain and obesity: Sitting for long periods can slow down metabolism, making it harder to burn calories and potentially leading to weight gain and obesity
- Metabolic Syndrome: Prolonged sitting is associated with a cluster of conditions known as metabolic syndrome, including high blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist, and unhealthy cholesterol levels.

SEDENTARY; THE UNAVOIDABLE PT. 2



COUNTERACT PROLONGED SITTING

Strategies to Combat Sitting

1. Take Frequent Breaks: At every stop, stretch and walk around.
2. Perform Seated Exercises: Shoulder rolls, pelvic rocks (forward and back) and neck stretches while driving (use caution when neck stretching and driving)
3. Use a Standing Desk at Stops: Standing while doing paperwork or eating promotes circulation.
4. Walk or Perform Bodyweight Exercises: Squats, lunges, and toe raises help maintain strength. Keep it simple, do anything you can to get movement or exercise in.
5. Hydrate Consistently: Proper hydration keeps your tissues well lubricated. Dehydrated tissues get stiff and achy quicker

Final Words

Truck drivers face significant physical challenges due to prolonged sitting and repetitive stress on the body. However, by incorporating small but effective habits—such as proper seat adjustments, regular movement, stretching, and core strengthening—drivers can prevent back pain, counteract the negative effects of long hours on the road, and maintain good posture. Consistently practicing these strategies will lead to better health, increased comfort, and improved overall performance in their demanding profession. It doesn't have to be rocket science; move more, stretch more. eat real foods, skip the processed foods.

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