

THE INDUSTRIAL ATHLETE DIGEST

Weekly Wellness & Safety Tips from Work Right NW

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OUR PPE SUIT OF ARMOR

You may not realize that you, too, have a suit of armor, maybe not as invincible as Iron Man's but super nonetheless. The other good news? It's adaptable!

Our own physical strength and stability does more than give it credit for. Forces are continually placed on us whether its sitting at a desk (yes - we battle many forces JUST sitting at a desk) or working with heavy equipment. Those forces may be once a day or throughout the day. For example, if you are in the *desklete* crowd, you have a constant force during the day pulling your upper body and head forward. Our body has to continually fight that force to pull us upright and keep our head upright. This is why we continually harp on building strength in our upper back so it can continue to do its daily duty of keeping us upright. Opposite to this might be a task or job only done once a day. It's equally as important to ensure we have the strength to do something all day long, not just a handful of times.

While ensuring we have the correct outer protective equipment (PPE) on us, its important to not overlook the importance of the body that supports us. Although our strength is adaptable, it is not invincible.



STRENGTH ADAPTABILITY

Do you remember what it was like when you first started your job? You may have been more tired or more stiff and sore than usual. This is because you were placing demands on the body it had not adapted to...yet. Then slowly and seemingly magically you returned to normal. That new "normal" was an adaptation of your body to lengthen, get stronger in certain areas, and stabilize in different positions. Slow and steady stress over time sends a message to our body that we need more "oomph" in certain areas. It generally takes 6-8 weeks

to work out the kinks but if it's done right, we end up stronger.

NO SUCH THING AS INVINCIBLE

This is a message for our younger selves and younger co-workers... *our bodies are not invincible*. It's easy to THINK we can lift something heavy because younger bodies are more agile in their recovery. However, we all have a breaking point and recognizing this is key to our strength PPE. Just because we CAN lift it doesn't mean we SHOULD lift it. Look for alternative ways for those tasks that we know are more stressful. These simple habits help us many times over in the long run.

INCREDIBLE STRENGTHENING MACHINES

Our ability to strengthen over time is a superhuman power. The secret: slow loading *over time* in the correct position. This secret works whether you are young or experienced in life. **A quality strength and conditioning habit throughout your life is the ultimate PPE.** It may change depending on your work, hobbies, or age, but consistency is the important part. Our ability to maintain performance, heal, and feel good is reliant on our strength. There is not a one-size-fits-all strength routine. You may prefer body weight strengthening (like yoga) over resistance based training (like weight training) or high intensity training over low intensity training. All are great as long as you follow the simple rule of gradually increasing the load over time in good postural positions. Make sure to check in with your physician before starting anything new. Your onsite Injury Prevention Specialist is a fantastic resource to point you in the right direction or help create a program just for you!

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Work Right NW is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialists in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.