

THE INDUSTRIAL ATHLETE DIGEST

Weekly Wellness & Safety Tips from Work Right NW

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AWARENESS LEVEL MIDNIGHT

Situational awareness is no joke. It's a critical, on-the-job skill that helps to identify hazards, make effective decisions, and prevent accidents. Avoid the cleanup on aisle 5 and mop the ice with those injury risks!



BY ALEX SCHMALTZ, LAT, ATC

SCARN SLAM METHOD

Situational awareness involves being able to perceive, understand, and effectively respond to one's situation. This can be done with **the SLAM method**.

- **STOP:** Think before you act. What does the task at hand require?
- **LOOK:** Carefully assess the area for potential hazards.
- **ASSESS:** Evaluate the hazards and make sure you have the proper PPE, equipment, and training to be safe
- **MANAGE:** Ask questions, make changes, and take required actions to work safely



AWARENESS REDUCTION

Some of the most common factors that reduce situational awareness include:

- Rushing through a task
- Mental or physical fatigue
- Complacency
- Poor communication
- Distractions or daydreaming
- Stress

As an industrial athlete, it's important to be aware of hazards in your workspace. Keep an eye out where your co-workers are and what they are doing. Is there operational machinery running? What's going on above or behind you? Are there any slip or trip hazards on the floor? To be situationally aware, you must be able to *comprehend* and *react* to these hazards to avoid an injury while on the job.

PROACTIVE AWARENESS

There are also times where a heightened sense of awareness is necessary, such as:


- When starting an unfamiliar task or position
- Working with new coworkers
- Beginning a new task
- Under observation by visitors or supervisors
- High hazard operations - elevated platforms, confined spaces, near electrical, etc.
- When having a gut feeling that something is "off"

A huge part of being situationally aware is to be able to be proactive and speak up if you see a hazard that can pose a danger to you or your co-workers. Stopping to ask for assistance or to make adjustments to a task to ensure it gets done safely is critical for safety. Paying attention to PPE that you and your team wear or display is also a huge proactive element to prevent injuries.

Keep your head on a swivel!



SITUATIONALLY PREPARED

Being situationally aware also utilizes some of our **PREPARED** principals. We encourage industrial athletes to **[R] - Review Your Hazards**, **[E] - Examine Your Equipment**, and **[D] - Debrief** from a work shift to notate any out-of-the-ordinary occurrences. In doing so you'll be ready to stay safe and situationally aware. 

Alex Schmaltz, LAT, ATC ||

Alex is a Certified Athletic Trainer who is a recent transplant to Portland, OR from Louisiana, where she attended the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She began her athletic training career in the high school and community college settings before switching to the industrial setting in the Pacific Northwest. She enjoys spending time with her two dogs, hiking, mountain biking, skiing, paddle boarding, and is always willing to try something new.

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.

