

While working, it is often necessary to bend, squat, crawl, or kneel for extended periods. Any of these activities may cause injury to your knees.

Knee injuries can be placed into 2 categories: impact injuries and strain & sprain injuries. Following are some steps to protect your knees and reduce the chance of knee injury.

Impact Knee Injuries: Impact injuries occur as a result of being struck in the knee, or your knee striking an object such as the floor. Repetitive kneeling or kneeling for extended periods with your body weight supported on your kneecaps can also cause impact injury to your knees. Knee pads are essential to the prevention of impact knee injuries. Knee pads for commercial or industrial use normally come in two varieties:

- **Soft padded cover** that cushions knee. These kneepads will provide adequate protection for short term or occasional use.
- **Hard Plastic or leather outer layer** over padded inner layer. These knee pads are better suited for extended and daily use; they will wear better and provide more protection to the knee.

Knee pads should be used whenever your knees are susceptible to repetitive banging or grinding or when your job requires you to be on your knees for extended periods. While crawling on the floor or kneeling to perform a task it is possible that you will injure your knee by the pressure and impact of your kneecap bearing the weight of your body. **Impact injuries can be very painful and may be permanent.**

Strain & Sprain Knee Injuries: Strain and sprain injuries usually occur as the result of the knee joint twisting, attempting to place too much weight on the knee, or hyperextension of the knee joint. Hyperextension is caused by straining the knee joint too far in the direction opposite the way the knee is designed to bend. Following are prevention techniques to reduce the chance of strain and sprain knee injuries:

- **Stretch your legs** prior to beginning work.
- **Stretch your legs** frequently while squatting, bending, or kneeling (note that a baseball catcher will frequently stand up to stretch his/her legs).
- **Be aware** of uneven walking surfaces that may increase the chance of twisting a knee, especially while carrying a load
- **Do not carry** a load that is too heavy and may cause a serious back or knee injury.
- **If you have** weak or previously injured knees wear your knee brace while working on the job just as you would while playing sports.
- **If you have** previously experienced knee injuries, exercises to help strengthen the leg muscles which support and hold your knees in the are necessary for proper support
- **Do not lock** your knees while performing routine tasks as this may increase the chance of hyperextending the knee joint.
- **Use extra caution** when using ladders and stairs.

Your knees are a vital and vulnerable part of your body. Injuries experienced may not be apparent or may seem insignificant until later in your life. For these reasons it is extremely important that you protect and use preventative measures to keep your knees free of injuries and working properly for life.