

REAL LIFE LESSONS

FROM TRUCK DRIVERS INJURED AT WORK



EVERY WHICH WAY BUT LOOSE

Years ago there was a popular country song with that title and the singer was describing how his girlfriend turned him every which way but loose. Then they made a movie with that theme song and Clint Eastwood starred in it, along with a chimpanzee. Clint probably made a lot of money for his performance and the chimp probably made some “chump” change. However, and once again, that has little to do with this Real Life Lesson other than being a lead in for a discussion regarding muscle strains and truck drivers.

There are several ways a truck driver can strain/pull a muscle. Examples include raising/lowering the hood of the truck, opening/closing the trailer doors, handling freight, tarping and securing loads, and even getting in/out of the truck cab. In addition to the exposure to these hazards, drivers also deal with another issue that can contribute to muscle strains – static posture (sitting in the cab of a truck for extended periods of time). Add these together and the result is several injuries due to muscle strains.

Mack strained a large muscle in his upper back a few months ago when he was attempting to raise the hood on his truck. He had done it before, so it was no big deal. However, on that particular day the wind was blowing and it increased the amount of pull that Mack had to put into the effort. He tore his “trap” muscle and it felt like someone had stabbed him in the shoulder blade. Believe it or not, his injury kept him from driving for awhile because he was not medically cleared to drive. During each exam his physician would turn him every which way – but loose (released to drive). Don’t let it happen to you.

REAL LIFE LESSON

As mentioned, being a truck driver sometimes requires that you do something physically challenging outside the cab of your truck. Attempting to perform these tasks without preparing your body can prove to be painful, both short term and long term. Here are two “preparatory” activities that can be accomplished anywhere immediately prior to performing a physically challenging task.

- 1) Talk a short walk. This will slightly elevate your heart rate and get blood flowing to your muscles.
- 2) Stretch and “warm up” the primary joints and muscles that will be utilized in the physical task. If professional athletes do it before every contest why shouldn’t professional truck drivers do it as well?