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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Tips on Sandbagging

It has been a great many years since Merritt has witnessed such high levels of water in the rivers of the Nicola Valley. The result has been an influx of patients to our office who have very sore backs due to sandbagging the edges of the rivers. Therefore, I would like to give some simple advice when it comes to doing this rather rare but necessary task.

- 1) First of all, get help. Working ferociously for hours with inadequate manpower is too much of a burden for anyone's back.
- 2) When bending over to lift a filled bag, maintain a concave curve in your low back. Keeping this posture while lifting makes your buttock protrude backwards. It may look a tad funny but it will save you a lot of pain and suffering.
- 3) When reaching down to lift a filled bag, bend at your knees. Do not bend at your lower back and lose that concave curve. Once you have a good hold on the filled bag, use the powerful muscles in your upper legs and hips to lift it. If you repetitively use the muscles of your lower back and lose that concave curve, you are asking for trouble.
- 4) If you have a good supply of sandbags, do not completely fill each one. You will have to fill more of them in the end but the weight of each will be less.
- 5) Try to place the pile of sand as near to the area where you will be filling the bags as possible. This will lessen the distance you will carry each bag.
- 6) Take a short break every hour or so. Most people are not accustomed to doing heavy physical work such as sandbagging.
- 7) If you feel an ache, sharp pain, or distinct warmth in your low back, stop working immediately. Apply an ice pack (a bag of frozen peas work great) at 20-minute intervals with 25 minutes between each application and see your Chiropractor that day.
- 8) If you wake up the next morning in extreme pain or have numbness/tingling in your buttocks or legs, see your Chiropractor immediately.
- 9) Stretch your back before, during, and after doing any form of heavy work. For diagrams and instructions on how to do this, log onto our website at www.merrittchiro.com and go to the "free stretches and exercises" section.

For those of you that have already done as much sandbagging as you need to for now, your back may require a tune-up. Even if you are not in significant pain, the joints in your low back may have lost some of their potential movement or mobility due to the heavy burden you just put on it. If you are waking up in the morning or at night with even mild stiffness in your back that goes away when you start moving around, this is a “warning sign” that you need to take seriously. It is at this time that you require a Chiropractor to do “adjustments” in order to fully restore the movement of the joints in your back. Then, the next time you need to lift something heavy (such as more sandbags) your back will not let you down.