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

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## Which Jobs are the Worst for Your Back?

So whose job is the hardest on the back? When I have someone in my office that is suffering from severe low back pain, he or she will often claim that theirs is the worst. However, in a recent informal survey, members of the American Chiropractic Association's House of Delegates rated the jobs they consider to be the most "back breaking." In their opinion, the following occupations (from 10<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup>) cause the most stress and strains on the muscles of the back.

10. Auto mechanics. They work in physically awkward positions all day long, bending over cars, sliding under cars, etc. Having to look "up and back" at the underside of cars causes neck problems, as well.
9. Nursing home workers have to lift elderly people into and out of bed. The workers' bodies can become twisted and off-center. Sometimes the seniors make sudden movements, which can result in workers' unexpected injuries.
8. Delivery drivers are always running, often carrying heavy and awkward packages. Packages shipped via UPS, FedEx, etc., have increased in weight over the years. The job also involves a lot of driving, which is rough on the back.
7. Firefighters/EMTs. When they have a job to do, the conditions are extreme. They have to deal with fire and the water pressure from hoses and chop obstacles down with an axe to get closer to the fire. They often have to carry people to safety, which is particularly difficult if the victim is obese or incapacitated.
6. Shingle roofers. The worker's body is always at angle, twisted, or in some other awkward position.
5. Farmers lift heavy equipment and bags of feed and grain. When doing fieldwork, they have to constantly turn backward to watch equipment that is pulled behind a tractor.
4. Police officers sit in their cars for long periods of time, which is rough on the lower back. When called into action, they have to make sudden movements. They often face resistance from those they are arresting or they can be attacked, which may harm the back. Police officers also wear belts that can weigh up to 40 pounds, which is a common cause of chronic back pain.
3. Landscapers. Landscaping may involve more heavy lifting than any other profession. Rocks, heavy dirt, sand, peat moss, and mulch are all extremely heavy. Wheelbarrows can twist and turn, wrenching the workers' backs-particularly when they attempt to "catch" the slipping wheelbarrow.

2. Construction workers' jobs can involve hammering, lifting, steelwork, or ironwork-all in very awkward positions. Moving steel beams can wreak havoc on the entire body.

1. Heavy truck and tractor-trailer drivers. The constant compression and vibration from such trucks can damage the back. Prolonged sitting puts pressure on the spine, which can result in disc degeneration. Liquid-carrying trucks are particularly bad. When this type of truck comes to a sudden stop, the fluid in the truck's tank slams back and forth, and the driver feels the impact. Also, because professional truck drivers are always on the road, their diets are seldom what they should be, which can contribute to weight gain and eventual back problems.

For those of you involved in the above occupations, or anything else that results in significant stress on your low back, you need to be as proactive as possible. This should involve muscle stretching, consistent exercise, maintaining a healthy body weight, and seeing your chiropractor regularly. By seeing your chiropractor regularly, any minor problems in your low back will be identified and corrected before they become serious. As well, proactive chiropractic treatment (when you are not in pain at all) will help maintain your spine's full mobility and flexibility, making it less prone to injury in the first place.