

# AN EMPLOYEE GUIDE



**MILT'S**

**5 STEP GUIDE TO**

**S.A.F.E.R.**

**SAFETY**

By Milton Jacobs, Certified Safety Professional (CSP)



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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# SAFETY FIRST!?

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- A** DJUST YOUR MINDSET
- F**OCUS ON NOW
- E**XERCISE FOR SAFETY
- R**ISK AND REDUNDANCY

Sometimes it seems like we are inundated with safety slogans such as Safety First; Safety is No Accident; Think Safety; Safety is My Goal; Be Safe; Safety is 24-7; Safety is My Mission.

While driving, have you ever noticed a vehicle with the “Safety is My Goal” sticker on the back? If you saw the driver operating the vehicle in an unsafe manner, would you report it? Would you take into consideration your own safety as you pull out a pen and paper (while driving 65 miles per hour) to write down the 10 digit telephone number, plus the 5 digit vehicle code (all written in small font)?

My point is this, we have to be careful that we are not sending the wrong message or contributing to poor safety habits and mindsets by trying to over promote safety.

The purpose of this booklet is not to offer new slogans but to improve your safety IQ while reducing your risk of injury through the use of simple everyday concepts.



In sports, when a team is in a slump or not playing up to their potential, we often refer to the team as losing its *mojo* or its magical way of doing something successfully.

In safety, when I use the term, *safety mojo* I am referring to the intuition that we all have. It is the feeling that you get in your gut or the voice in our head that sounds off just before you are going to do something that is unsafe. It is that voice that says, “I probably shouldn’t climb that old ladder to clean the gutters” or “Don’t walk down that dark alley, take the main street with the lights”.

Too often during our everyday activities, our *mojo* is drowned out by our mindset, distractions, lack of focus on the present moment or our rushing to get things done. Productivity, efficiency, quality and safety are all improved when we have our *safety mojo*.

We all have these intuitive feelings from time to time and we have to be careful not to ignore them. Not only can they assist us with safety, quality and productivity but with life situations as well.

Keep your *safety mojo* alive by considering the following tip.



Stop and Listen.

When you get that gut feeling or hear that voice in your head telling you **SOMETHING IS WRONG**, stop for a minute and listen. Identify whether or not it is advising you to take a different action (more than likely a SAFER alternative) to the one you are about to choose.

Being in touch with your *safety mojo*, along with the four other steps in this booklet will provide you with the tools and knowledge to make safer life choices.

## S.A.F.E.R. INSIGHTS

Don't ignore your safety mojo - pay attention to it! It is the feeling that you get in your gut just before you are going to do something unsafe.



# ADJUST YOUR MINDSET



**H**ave you ever had a bad day in which nothing went as planned? You overslept, yelled at the kids, stepped on the dog while going down the stairs and spilled your coffee on your lap while driving to work!

Somewhere along the way you told yourself “it’s going to be a bad day” and it was.

That “bad day” statement was recorded in your mind and it more than likely stuck there. This is mindset. It is setting an expectation about the outcome of something, which in this case, was your day. Your mind moved along the path of your expectations without you being aware of it. Some people have a permanent “bad day” mindset- the perpetual pessimist that usually drags down everyone else around them.

Attitudes can contribute to your mindset and a negative mindset is not good for safety. While we do not have to be bundles of joy every minute of the day, a general attitude of positivity has a positive impact on our mood, outlook, how we deal and interact with each other and safety as well.

Following, is a tip to help you with changing your mindset, not only about safety, but also about life in general.





Change Your Words,  
Change Your Attitude.

Use and repeat positive words and phrases. It helps to create a positive frame of mind.

For instance instead of saying, “*accidents happen*” try saying, “*accidents are preventable*” or instead of saying “*today is going to be a bad day*” try saying “*things can only get better*”.

## S.A.F.E.R. INSIGHTS

Mindset does matter! Focus on positive things as the mind moves along the path of your expectations!

Safety is much more than just a hard hat or a pair of safety glasses- it is a mindset!



**H**ow many of you have driven to a destination and not remembered any of the trip, the landmarks or the vehicles passed along the way? Maybe you missed an exit or turn while driving to a familiar place?

It could be that you were thinking of the fight you had with your spouse that morning or worrying about the bills that need to be paid. Whatever it was, you were not focusing on the present moment.

This “spacing out” tends to happen when we are undertaking routine activities and may lead to errors or injuries.

Unfortunately this occurs quite frequently and when it occurs while performing an important task like driving or operating equipment or machinery it could lead not only to personal injury but injury to others as well.

No one can change what has happened in the past. What we can do is deal with what is currently taking place. It is important that we try to live in the present moment and not focus on things from the past (the fight earlier that morning) or the future (the unpaid bills).

Following are tips to help you focus on the present moment:





## Take 5 Deep Breaths.

When you find yourself daydreaming, immediately take five deep SLOW breaths and focus on your breath. This provides increased oxygen to the brain, helps to reduce mental sluggishness and redirects the brain to exactly what you are doing at the present time. Breathe in through your nose and out through your nose (not mouth) and focus intently on your breathing (the rise and fall of your stomach). Once you are aware that you are focusing on your breath, you are in the present moment.



## Take a Time Out!

Consider taking a time out, sitting quietly, alone, without doing anything for a couple of minutes. This time out could be done first thing in the morning when you get up, at break time, or on the bus or train. The key is to do nothing but focus on your breathing. You will discover that it can be challenging to focus. For most of us, our mind naturally wanders and it is difficult to focus on only one thing. Although it can be difficult, keep working at it! The purpose of the time out is to re-calibrate your mind to allow it to focus more on the present moment.



# EXERCISE FOR SAFETY



When you hear the word exercise what picture do you develop in your mind? For many of us we picture someone riding a bicycle on the side of the street or a person on a treadmill, sweating like crazy, while running at a fast pace. In other words,

the first thing that comes to mind is aerobic exercise as opposed to resistance or strength exercises (i.e. weight training).

As we age we lose muscle mass, bone, tendon and ligament strength, which all have a direct impact on our ability to perform routine and difficult tasks. Resistance training reduces our risk of injuries from strains, sprains and falls (which are all leading causes of injury). It increases muscle strength and basic functionality as well as improves our mood and reduces stress.

Following is a tip to help you get started. Remember to check with your doctor before you begin any exercise program.

## S.A.F.E.R. INSIGHTS

Think of exercise as your daily "multivitamin" that helps to keep you healthy, safe, and strong.



## Make an Exercise Assessment and Start.

Make an honest personal assessment of just how active you are and the types of activity you are performing daily. Follow the below steps:

1. Include these 3 activities into your exercise routine:
  - a) Strength (resistance exercises or weight training)
  - b) Endurance (aerobic activity such as brisk walking, running or cycling)
  - c) Flexibility (stretching or yoga).
2. To get started, perform strength and endurance activities at least twice per week, on alternating days.
3. Incorporate warm-up and stretching before strength activities and after endurance activities.
4. Watch your nutrition. There is truth to the quote “You are what you eat”. Eat nutrient dense, whole foods, whenever possible. If you put junk into your body it will not function properly and you will suffer the health consequences.

There are many exercise and nutrition programs out there. The key is to find one that works for you and stick with it. Always consult with your doctor before starting any exercise or nutrition program.



# RISK & REDUNDANCY



**W**ould you ever go skydiving or bungee jumping? Would you ride your bike without a helmet or text while driving?

You may have answered yes to some or all of the above. Each of these activities involves some form of risk to yourself or others and offers some indication of your tolerance for risk.

Risk is the likelihood that a person will be harmed if exposed to a hazard.

Perception of risk varies by person and depends on what you find acceptable based on your current daily activities. This may be why we take chances that pre-dispose us to injury.

On the following pages you will find the major injury risks in the workplace and in the home along with several tips.

## S.A.F.E.R. INSIGHTS

*There are risks in everything we do; some are greater than others.*





## **Major Causes of Injury at Work**

- Overexertion (pushing, pulling and carrying someone or something)
- Falls on same level
- Falls from elevations

*Liberty Mutual WSI, 2011*

## **Major Causes of Death at Work**

- Motor vehicle incident
- Contact with object or struck by
- Falls from elevations
- Homicides and violent acts

*NSC, Injury Facts, 2011*



## Take Safety Home.

Because there is a high risk of injury in the home it is prudent to take safety home with you. There were over 27 million emergency room visits and 65,200 injury deaths in 2007 and 2009, respectively (according to the National Safety Council).

Begin by identifying your top three safety risks. To do this ask yourself the question, “what are the top 3 ways (risks of injury) that I can be seriously injured or killed while doing this activity”? Next, take action using the safety C.P.R. hierarchy below.




## Know Your Safety C.P.R.

Safety C.P.R can be used to reduce your risks to an acceptable level.

### **C**ontrol or Change How It's Done

There are times you cannot completely eliminate a hazard. Alternatively, you may have to reduce the hazard to an acceptable level. For instance, instead of carrying 2 heavy boxes at once you might carry one at a time or get help carrying the boxes.





## **P**rotect Thyself

Sometimes for practical reasons, you cannot change how a task is performed and thus you need to use protective equipment (gloves, etc.) to protect yourself. While most think of protective equipment as a last resort, in many instances it becomes the primary option because it is quick, inexpensive and practical.

## **R**edundant Safety Precautions

Sometimes a situation is so high risk that added levels of safety precautions are needed.

We only have to look at vehicle safety over the years to see redundant safety measures in action (seat belts, air bags, anti-locking brakes).

When determining whether to use redundant precautions a good question to ask is “if something goes wrong, are the consequences catastrophic”? If the answer is yes, it’s time to look toward using redundant safety measures.



## **S.A.F.E.R. INSIGHTS**

*39.4 million visits were made to the ER for injuries in 2007. The majority of these visits were due to falls.*



## Major Causes of Hospital ER Visits

- Falls
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Struck by object
- Overexertion/  
strenuous activity

*NSC, Injury Facts, 2011*

**FACT:** 1.7 million  
people suffer  
Traumatic Brain  
Injury (TBI)  
from falls each year  
in the United States.

## Major Causes of Death at Home

- Poisoning (pain  
medications, etc.)
- Falls
- Struck by object
- Fire/smoke

*NIH 2013;NSC 2011*

**FACT:** There were  
more poisoning deaths  
in the 15-64 year old  
group than any  
other age group.



Take ACTION Now!

List *your* three major injury risks (at work and home) in the spaces provided below and use your safety C.P.R. to address them.

### HOME RISKS

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### WORK RISKS

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### PLAN OF ACTION

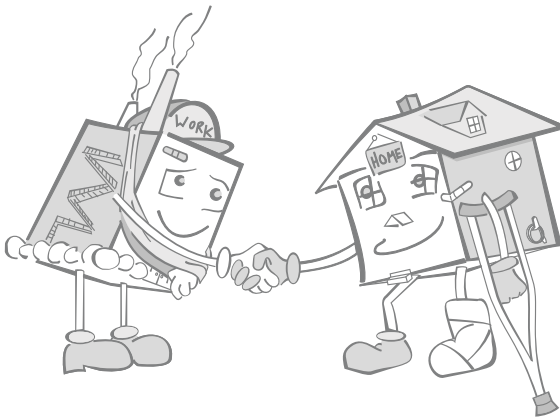
1. **C** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **P** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **R** \_\_\_\_\_

# THE FINAL WORD ON SAFETY...

The final word on safety is YOU! You hold the key to your safety success.

So what can YOU do? Take the tips in this booklet and put them to work for YOU.

Make sure you share your insights, safety suggestions and observations with others. We are all in this together!



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# DID YOU KNOW?\*

- Back pain affects 8 out of 10 Americans and is the most common cause of job related disability.
- Enough prescription painkillers were prescribed in 2010 to medicate every American adult around-the-clock for a month!
- After age 40, we lose 5% of our muscle size and strength every 10 years.
- Exercise strengthens bones and muscles, improves mood and reduces the risk of some forms of cancer.
- Performing resistance exercises (weights, calisthenics, etc.) as little as twice per week can improve muscle strength in men and women.
- Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death in the workplace and the fifth leading cause of death throughout the U.S. population.
- More people suffer home fatal injuries from poisoning and falls than all other causes.
- In 2009, 65,200 Americans were fatally injured in the home as compared to 4,551 in the workplace.

*\*NSC 2011, NIH, ACSM, CDC- 2013*

