



Use Safety Gear

CHALLENGE
Use safety gear,
as appropriate.

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE

1. Use safety gear (seat belt, helmet, eye protection, ear protection, proper clothing, etc.) at home and at work when appropriate.
2. Read "Use Safety Gear."
3. To complete the Health Challenge™, use safety gear on at least 22 days this month. (Exception: You need to wear a seat belt every time you're in a vehicle.)
4. Keep a record of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

Safety Saves Lives

All it takes is a split second. Fall off a ladder, hit a pothole riding your bike, or get in a car accident, and you could be seriously hurt or worse. An estimated 4.1 million people in the United States are injured at work every year. And more than 8 million disabling injuries occur at home annually. While not all accidents are preventable, most are. The right safety gear and precautions can keep you safe at work, at play, and at home.

Buckle Up

When you get in your car or truck, or ride along with someone else, buckle up. It only takes a few seconds. And ask everyone else in the car to fasten their seat belts. Auto accidents claim the lives of 34,000 people in the United States every year. And more than 12,000 of the drivers and passengers killed are not wearing seat belts.

Also, be sure your seat belt includes the shoulder strap. Adjust the lap belt so it lays low across your hips. If you're pregnant, position the lap belt under your belly. And if you're driving with infants and small children always have them ride in approved safety seats in the back seat. Most states have laws that require the use of seat belts. So even if you're not in an accident, not using your seat belt could still cost you.

Heads Up

Each year an estimated 1.7 million Americans sustain serious head injuries. About 75 percent of head injuries are concussions. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that shakes the brain inside the skull. You don't have to pass out to have a concussion.

But it's important to see a doctor after a head injury because you could have a brain injury even without any visible signs.



Helmet Required

Wearing the right helmet or hard hat to protect your head can prevent serious injury. Make it a habit to always wear a helmet when you:

- Ride a bicycle, skateboard, motorcycle, or off-road vehicle.
- Play baseball, football, softball, or hockey.
- Rock climb, rollerblade, snowboard, kayak, or ski.
- Work on a construction site or any place that requires hard hats.

Make sure the helmet or hard hat you wear fits snugly.

Here's some things to keep in mind about helmets to protect your head:

- Wear your helmet flat on top of your head – not tilted back at an angle.
- Make sure the helmet does not obstruct your field of vision.
- If your helmet has a chin strap, buckle it firmly. No combination of twisting or pulling should be able to remove or loosen the helmet.

If your helmet does withstand a major impact, replace it. Damage to a helmet may not be visible. A heavy impact can create small cracks in a helmet and reduce its ability to prevent injury.

Here's Looking at You

Each year more than 2.5 million eye injuries occur in the United States.

About 50,000 people lose part or all of their vision from eye-related accidents. But 90 percent of all eye injuries can be prevented with the right eyewear.



And you don't have to work in a machine shop or with toxic chemicals to be at risk for eye injuries. Most eye injuries are caused by tiny particles or objects such as metal slivers, wood chips, chemical sprays, or dust. And more serious damage can occur if an object penetrates the eye. And the hazards are everywhere. That's why protecting your eyes is so important. Remember to wear safety glasses or eye protection when you:

- **Play sports** like racquetball, handball, or paintball.
- **Are in the sun** for long periods of time.
- **Use solvents, detergents, cleaners, and fertilizers.** Read and follow all manufacturer instructions and warning labels.
- **Work on cars.** Battery acid, sparks, and flying debris can cause eye injuries. Keep a pair of goggles in your car, and wear them any time you make repairs.
- **Use power tools.** Flying debris from chain saws, circular saws, hedge trimmers, and other equipment can seriously hurt your eyes.

Listen Carefully



No matter how old or young you are, too much exposure to loud noise can permanently damage your hearing.

Noise-induced hearing loss is 100-percent preventable. But once you have hearing loss, you'll have it for life.

Damage can occur from a brief exposure to intense noise, such as fireworks exploding or a gun firing at close range. Or from continuous exposure to noise like from a power tool or loud music. Ear plugs or ear muffs can protect your ears from excessively loud noises. Wear ear protection if your environment is so loud that:

- You must raise your voice to be heard.
- You can't hear someone talking two feet away.
- Speech around you sounds muffled during or after leaving a noisy area.
- You have ringing in the ears (tinnitus) or feel ear pain after exposure to loud noises.

How loud is too loud?

Get sound advice here:

www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/ruler.asp

Stay Afloat

Swimming, boating, or other water sports are great summer activities, if you do them safely. But drowning claims the lives of nearly 3,500 people in the United States every year. Always use a life jacket when you're boating, kayaking, or canoeing. You never know when something could tip your boat or toss you in the water. A staggering 90 percent of boating-related deaths occur because the victims were not wearing life jackets.

The U.S. Coast Guard recommends wearing life jackets when:

- Waterskiing, kneeboarding, and other towed activities
- Sailboarding, windsurfing, parasailing
- Canoeing, kayaking, rafting
- Operating any kind of motorized watercraft



Walk This Way

You rely on your feet to carry you from place to place. And if your foot or toes are injured, you're not going to be as mobile as you would like. Without the right shoes, you could slip and fall, fracture a toe or bone in your foot, or get cut by something.

At work, about 40 percent of all foot injuries could be prevented by wearing the right footwear or safety shoes. At home, you might be tempted to wear flip-flops to mow the lawn or go for a short hike. But by doing so, you run a high risk of hurting your feet. Wearing the wrong shoes can also lead to foot pain, knee pain, and even hip and back pain.

Here's how to keep your feet happy:

- **Wear shoes that fit** and are suitable for your level of activity.
- **Wear safety shoes** or steel-toed boots if you work in hazardous areas.
- **Avoid wearing high-heels** for long periods of time.
- **Avoid wearing flip-flops** or flats too often.
- **Replace your shoes** when they have obvious signs of wear.



Safety is Common Sense

Whether you're at home, at work, in a car, or playing sports, common-sense behaviors can save your life. That's what safety gear is for.

Sources: National Safety Council; U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission; United States Eye Injury Registry; National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders; U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Transportation Safety Board





Wear Safety Gear

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you use safety gear.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you were able to meet this goal. You must meet this goal on at least 22 days during the month to complete the Challenge. *(But remember: You need to wear a seat belt every time you're in a vehicle.)* Then keep up this healthy practice for a lifetime of good health.

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MONTH: _____							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUN.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.	Weight & weekly summary
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_____ Number of days this month I used appropriate safety gear.

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

