

ISSUE 1 | VOLUME 14  
JANUARY-MARCH 2023

SAFETY & LOSS PREVENTION

# OUTLOOK

## THE PRICE OF PAYING MORE

THE COST OF INFLATION ON OUR  
FINANCES, SAFETY, & HEALTH

### ALSO INSIDE:

- How "micro-exercise" at work may help prevent absences
- Motorcycles and Cars — Sharing The Road Safely
- Workers' Compensation Claims Snapshot





# In This Issue

## THE COST OF INFLATION

Surging gas prices and shrinking food portions wreak havoc on our bank accounts. But inflation pervades into every other aspect of our lives, costing us a lot more than just money. Taking lessons from the past can help us find ways to ease the burdens of the present and plan for a better future.

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# THE PRICE OF PAYING MORE

## THE EFFECT OF HIGH GAS PRICES & INFLATION ON HEALTH & SAFETY

Last year's surge in fuel prices may have felt painfully familiar to those who remember the summer of 2008, when they surpassed \$4/gallon for the first time in history, followed shortly after by the Great Recession. Prices fell during that time but rose again in May 2011, staying between \$3.30 and \$3.95 for several years.

### HOW THE PAST INFORMS THE FUTURE

Higher fuel prices drive up costs in nearly every other economic sector as well, from electricity to agricultural production, and many fear the U.S. is about to see a repeat of the Great Recession. Whether or not this is the case, it's always a good idea to see what past periods of economic uncertainty can teach us about how to best prepare for the next one.

During price spikes in previous years, many sought to reduce their fuel consumption by switching to smaller, more fuel-efficient vehicles, as well as hybrid and electric cars. Budgets for travel deemed non-essential were slashed by businesses and individuals alike. Some offices even adopted a four-day work week or allowed telework to ease the burden of the commute on their employees.

With the retail price of regular unleaded peaking at over \$5 a gallon in some places last summer, drivers found themselves again looking for ways to save money at the pump. For some, this meant staying home, traveling less often, or foregoing long road trips, opting instead for destinations closer to home. Others tried alternate means of transportation – ridesharing, walking, bicycling, or using public transit.



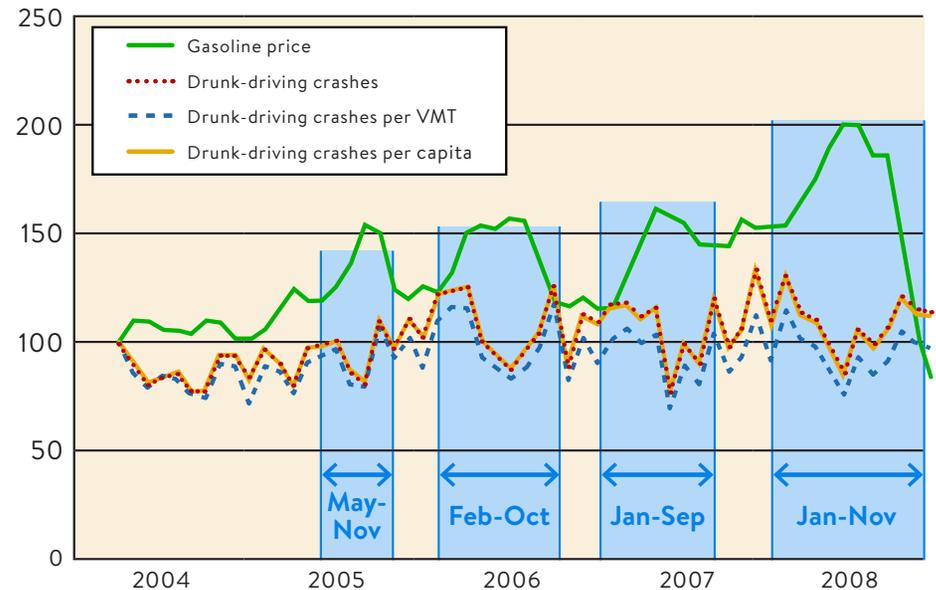
## THE GOOD NEWS

### Fewer Traffic Crashes

It stands to reason that fewer vehicles on the road means fewer traffic crashes, and research has borne this out:

- A 2014 [study](#) found that high gas prices not only incline people to drive less, but drivers often pay more attention to their driving habits, accelerating and braking more conservatively to reduce fuel consumption, and driving more safely as a result. The data showed that a \$1.00 increase in gas prices caused drivers to reduce their speed by an average of 0.27 mph, resulting in a reciprocal reduction of traffic crashes.
- A [study](#) published in the American Journal of Public Health in August 2015 examined traffic crash data between 2004 and 2012 and found “a positive association between higher gasoline prices and safer roads.”
- A [study](#) published in Transportation Engineering in June 2021 found a 34% decrease in fatal crashes between 2007 and 2011 and concluded that “economic factors are assumed to have substantial effects on transportation crashes.”

- A 2011 [study](#) determined that higher gasoline prices result in fewer drunk driving crashes, especially non-fatal crashes and those that result in property damage only. When gas prices increase, people consume less alcohol in general, drink at bars less often, and tend to stay closer to home to save fuel (see **Fig. 1**).



**Fig. 1.** Gasoline prices and drunk-driving crashes, April 2004-December 2008, Mississippi. **Note:** Both gasoline prices and drunk-driving crashes are standardized by indices (the first week of April 2004 = 100) to better visualize the association between their corresponding lines.

### Improvements to Physical Health

Not that higher fuel prices are a boon to any individual, but the need to save money may be just the push some people need to make lifestyle changes that improve their physical fitness and overall health (whether intentionally or not):

- During gas price spikes, people dine out less often, saving money by eating and drinking at home. Many choose to pack a lunch to bring to work or school rather than buying food at a restaurant. They also spend less when they do go out, particularly on alcoholic beverages, meaning many people imbibe less.

- Meals prepared at home tend to be healthier as well – the salt-laden fat bombs, free soda refills, and large portions offered in restaurants are easier to avoid when eating out isn't in the budget (though the bag of chips in the vending machine at work and that gallon of ice cream in the freezer at home are still tempting).
- Studies have also found an increase in physical activities, such as walking, running, and biking, as these tend to be inexpensive exercise options (as opposed to sports or gym memberships) and can be used by some as an alternative to driving.
- Interestingly, a 2012 [study](#) of American time use data found that “moderately energy-intensive” housework is the physical activity that increases the most when prices go up, as people cut back on expenses such as cleaning and lawn-mowing services, opting to spend calories instead of funds to get these jobs done. Cooking and eating at home more often means more mess to clean, and perhaps all that time at home inspires people to spruce up their spaces.

## THE BAD NEWS

### Financial Hardships for Those Already Struggling

As gas prices rise, so does inflation, issuing a one-two punch to low and middle income households who must figure out how to cut their already tight budgets, which often means cutting basic needs. Much of the “good news” previously listed only applies to those who have the means to make those changes.

- Those already not dining out are left to pinch pennies at the grocery store. While cooking at home typically means eating healthier, this advantage disappears when the household grocery budget is stretched too far. Healthier foods, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats, are already more expensive than less nutritious options, and with food prices skyrocketing, some families are forced to choose less healthy options, which can lead to health problems, both in the short and long term.
- Low and middle income drivers don't often have the means to purchase newer, more fuel-efficient vehicles when gas prices rise. The high cost of fuel also increases the price of public transit, so even taking the bus can become out of reach for some.

## Mental Health Decline

The rising cost of living has added to the already long list of current issues causing increased stress, which can damage mental health. Even worrying about financial insecurity has a destabilizing effect that can exacerbate existing mental health conditions.

- In June 2022, LifeWorks (a provider of workplace wellbeing solutions) released its monthly Mental Health Index, which showed that 20% of Americans are currently unable to meet their basic needs, such as food and housing, and their mental health score is nearly 16 points lower than the national average. An additional 15% feel uncertain that they will be secure next year.
- A March 2022 Harris poll conducted by the American Psychological Association to better understand the impact of the pandemic found that the rise in prices of every day items was cited as “a significant source of stress,” more than any other issue among those polled (see **Fig. 2**). It also found that the increase in unhealthy coping mechanisms that started during the first year of the pandemic, such as binge eating or drinking, has persisted, suggesting that mental and physical health may be on a continuing decline.

### % SAY IS A SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF STRESS

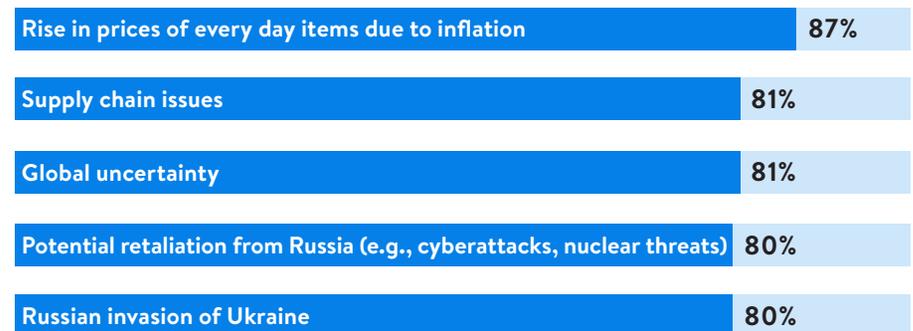


Fig. 2

© 2022 American Psychological Association

- According to Dr. Aisha Shariq, a psychiatrist with Texas Tech Health Sciences El Paso, financial insecurity leads to “higher rates of depression, anxiety, and even schizophrenia in vulnerable populations,” though people in all socioeconomic categories can be affected.

## Lower life satisfaction overall

Though higher gas prices can be credited for some improvements in health and safety, studies suggest they may also be linked to an overall decrease in happiness and life satisfaction.

- A 2012 [study](#) published in the Journal of Urban Economics concluded that when gas prices rise, subjective well-being declines, comparable to poor labor market conditions. This reduction is found to be nearly twice as large among car owners. According to researchers, the well-being losses generated by rising gas prices “likely offset some of the physical health benefits found in previous research.”

## THE TAKEAWAY

We may not be able to control gas prices or inflation, but knowing how to prepare and react can help us feel more in control of its effects on our lives, which can not only improve our financial situation, but also our overall health and well-being.

### For Employers and Safety Coordinators:

Faced with the fears and realities of inflation, employees might be more on edge than ever. It’s a good time to check in with your employees and remind them about available programs that can help. The state of Florida’s Employee Assistance Program offers free personal, financial, and legal counseling services to all state employees (including OPS and other non-benefit eligible employees) and their dependents, as well as online tools and information found on their website.



**KEPRO EAP**

Call toll free: 1-833-746-8337

[MyLifeExpert.com](http://MyLifeExpert.com)

Company Code: FLORIDA

## SAVE MONEY & REDUCE ANGST WITH MINDFUL SPENDING

**Beware of “shrinkflation” and “shadow inflation.”** Rather than raise prices (which consumers would more readily notice), companies decrease the amount of product in a package and charge the same amount. This goes for restaurants as well – you may find smaller portion sizes – and many types of businesses have cut services (remember those little mints on the hotel pillows?). When shopping, stick to store brands, as they tend to be the last to succumb to shrinkage, and check the unit price of items to see how much things actually cost.

**Shop around and stock up on deals.** Look online for the best prices and take advantage of sales and promotions to keep your food budget under control. Shopping at warehouse clubs can help save money on non-perishables like paper goods, packaged foods, and toiletries. Find an app or website to find the best gas price near you before you head to the pump.

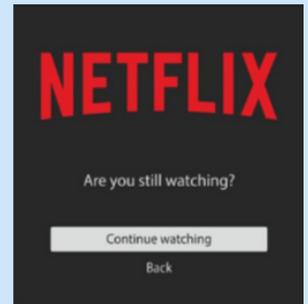
**When your car lease is up, buy the car.** Your vehicle’s lease-end price was set when you signed the lease. The price you pay will be unaffected by inflation, while the actual value of the vehicle will have increased by around 35%.

**Reflect on each and every purchase before you make it.** In the age of electronic purchases and automatic payments, spending money often happens without a second thought. An examination of each purchase you make (beyond basic necessities) will help you choose those that have the highest “return on happiness” and forego the rest. You may find you are still paying monthly fees for services you rarely use or even forgot about entirely.

**Squeeze more mileage out of your tank** by driving evenly, coasting as much as possible, sticking to speed limits, and even removing your roof rack, which can create drag.

**Consider changing your phone & internet plans.** Some internet providers offer cellphone service plans that can be bundled with internet service to save money. Lower income families may qualify for the [Affordable Connectivity Program](#), which helps with internet bills.

**It’s only a good deal if it works for you.** The buy-one-get-one deal on food that will spoil before you can use it, the lower-price laundry detergent that requires you to use more or wash loads twice to get them clean, those shoes that were on sale but hurt your feet – these are not good deals. Look for bargains on things you truly need and use, and remember the old adage, “You get what you pay for.”



If the answer is no, cancel the service and save the money for something you really enjoy.

# A DANGEROUS TRADE-OFF

Healthier behavior and overall safer roads may be the bright side of higher prices, but there is a dark side – an increase in motorcycle crashes. During gas price spikes, many people see motorcycles as an attractive alternative to four-wheeled vehicles due to their lower fuel consumption and maintenance costs – but motorcycles are far more dangerous. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, riders are more likely to be involved in crashes, 35 times more likely to sustain serious injuries, and 28 times more likely to be killed in a crash than other motor vehicle drivers. Even with fewer automobiles on the road, an increase in motorcyclists (many of whom are inexperienced riders) means more motorcycle crashes. A 2021 study found that a \$1.00 increase in gas prices was associated with a 24.2% increase in fatal motorcycle crashes.

But the number of pedestrians and bicyclists also increases with the cost of gasoline – why doesn't the rate of fatal accidents increase for them the same way it does for motorcyclists? A few reasons:

1. Nearly all fatal crashes involving pedestrians or bicyclists also involve four-wheeled vehicles, so the decrease in the number of vehicles on the road also decreases the likelihood of such collisions.
2. Pedestrians and bicycles typically travel on paths or lanes that separate them from vehicular traffic, whereas motorcycles do not.
3. Motorcyclists are far more likely to die in crashes – even ones that don't involve other vehicles – than pedestrians or bicyclists, simply because they travel at much more dangerous speeds.





# MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

With more and more motorcycles on the road, safety becomes increasingly important, both for those who ride motorcycles and those who share the road with them. But many four-wheel vehicle drivers are unaware of the added dangers cyclists face or how to drive safely in their presence. Knowing the rules of the road for motorcyclists can help keep everyone safe.

**All motorcyclists must take a special riding education class and pass a written and riding test separate from a regular driver's license. Here are some things every motorcyclist should know:**

- Always wear your safety gear. Look for a helmet that meets federal safety requirements, with the U.S. Dept. of Transportation symbol on the back. Arms and legs should be completely covered, ideally with leather or heavy denim. Footwear should cover ankles. Gloves provide better grip as well as protecting your hands. Bright and/or reflective clothing can help other drivers to see you.
- Follow traffic laws, ride defensively, and don't take risks. Obey all traffic lights, signs, speed limits, and lane markings. Leave plenty of room between you and other drivers, and assume that they don't see you. Keep your headlights on, even during the day for added visibility.
- The safest place to ride is the leftmost third of the lane, which offers good visibility and flexible escape routes. Use different lane positions to increase your visibility to other vehicles (stay out of blind spots), avoid obstacles, and position yourself for turns.
- Passengers should mount the motorcycle only after the engine has started and should sit as far forward as possible with both feet on the foot rests at all times.
- Riding between two lanes of slower moving vehicles ("lane splitting") or pulling up between stopped vehicles at a light ("lane filtering") are not only dangerous, they are illegal under Florida Statute 316.209.
- As with any motorized vehicle, **DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE.**



**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Wrong or sudden turns are the most common cause of single-vehicle motorcycle crash deaths, followed by speeding and alcohol use.**



# SHARING THE ROAD

In 2020, more than 5,500 motorcyclists in the U.S. died in crashes, 600 in the state of Florida alone — and those numbers are on the rise.

It is every driver's responsibility to practice good driving habits to share the road safely.

**Around 66% of all motorcycle crashes involve a collision with another vehicle, and 60% of those collisions are the fault of the other vehicle. All too often motorists neglect to yield to motorcycles or fail to see them at all. Sharing the road requires special attention to keep everyone safe.**

**Eliminate distractions.** Keep your eyes on the road at all times when driving. Put your phone out of sight and reach so you aren't tempted to check it if you hear a notification ding. Keep your radio volume down low enough to hear approaching motorcycles, sirens, or warnings from passengers.

**Drive sober and alert.** Drivers and motorcycle riders under the influence of alcohol are responsible for 33% of all motorcycle deaths. Remember that drowsy driving can be just as dangerous. Both alcohol and sleep deprivation can affect your coordination, judgement, and reaction time.

**Encourage passengers to point out motorcycles to the driver.** A motorcycle's narrow profile makes it easy to disappear into a blind spot or seem to appear out of nowhere. Those in the passenger or back seats have a different range of vision and might be able to see a bike that the driver cannot.

**Allow extra room and extra time.** One of the most common types of accidents motorcyclists endure is being rear-ended by another vehicle. Leave extra room between your vehicle and motorcycles, as they can stop more quickly and require a shorter stopping distance.

**Use your mirrors.** Be sure your mirrors are positioned properly and check them often while driving, especially when turning or changing lanes.

**Look behind you when exiting a parked car.** Always check for oncoming vehicles before opening the door, especially in parallel or tight parking spaces, heavy traffic, and areas where people are commonly dropped off. Not only can motorcyclists be seriously injured by the impact of a car door, a rider clipped by a door is at additional risk of being run over by a trailing vehicle.

**Be extra careful in intersections and construction zones.** Intersections are the "danger zone" for motorcycles; always double check that the path is clear before crossing or turning at an intersection. Motorcyclists have a harder time navigating hazards, and road bumps and construction debris can cause a cyclist to need to swerve without warning.

**Give extra clearance during inclement weather.** Slick roads can be extra challenging on two wheels, and cyclists don't have the advantage of a roof or windshield to keep their vision clear.

**Use your turn signals sooner.** Be extra careful when turning and changing lanes to be certain motorcyclists around you are aware of what you're doing. Also be sure to watch their turn signals — many models do not have an auto-shutoff feature, and riders might forget to turn them off. If a cyclist's turn signal is on, always assume they are turning, and increase your following distance.

**Scan the road.** Fixing your gaze for more than a few seconds on any single object can cause peripheral blindness; keep your eyes moving across your field of vision to avoid this phenomenon.

**Be respectful.** Treat motorcyclists with the same respect you give other motorists, and remember to yield the right-of-way to them.

## SAFE PASSAGE

Whether it be nervousness or irritation, some drivers seek to pass a motorcycle just to avoid driving behind one. Remember that motorcyclists have the same rights to use the road as you do. Every time a vehicle passes another vehicle increases the risk of accidents, so avoid passing motorcycles unless absolutely necessary.

### When is it acceptable to pass a motorcycle?

- The motorcycle has slowed well below the speed limit or flow of traffic. But first, try to figure out why – if road conditions are causing the motorcycle to slow down, they could also make passing dangerous. If it appears no hazards are present, proceed with a safe lane change.
- You are in a legal passing zone – on a road with two lanes traveling in the same direction, or a broken centerline on a road with cross traffic. Never pass when a double yellow line is present.
- The lane is clear enough to pass safely. When using a cross-traffic lane, make sure you have time to get out of the way of oncoming traffic.
- You can pass safely without exceeding the speed limit or current flow of traffic.
- You can use the left lane to pass. If you cannot pass without using the right lane, DON'T. Passing on the right is dangerous, especially around motorcycles.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Association estimates helmets to be 37% effective in preventing fatal injuries to motorcycle riders. In other words, for every 100 non-helmeted riders killed in crashes, 37 of them could have been saved by wearing a helmet.

More motorcyclists die on Florida roads than those of any other state. Even as the number of motorcycle crashes has decreased, the number of fatalities has increased. The vast majority of these deaths were riders without helmets.

In 2000, Florida's universal motorcycle helmet law was amended to require helmets only for riders uninsured or under age 21. Within two years of this change, observed helmet use dropped from nearly 100% to around 50%, even among riders still required to wear them by law. In the first three years following the law change, motorcyclist deaths in Florida jumped 81%.

*(Source: FDHSMV Injury data Florida crash database)*

# WATCH FOR MOTORCYCLES



[www.RideSmartFlorida.com](http://www.RideSmartFlorida.com)



**In driver surveys, FDOT has asked people how often they see motorcycles.**

**Those with certified motorcycle endorsements on their driver's licenses report seeing them on the road all the time, while other drivers in the same area report seeing motorcycles only occasionally.**

**Increasing awareness of motorcycles actually makes drivers more likely to see them.**



## 'MICRO-EXERCISE' DURING WORK HOURS MAY HELP PREVENT LONG-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCES

Copenhagen, Denmark – Performing “simple and brief strengthening exercises designed to strengthen the primary muscles used during work” – known as micro-exercise – while on the job may help prevent long-term sickness absences, according to a recent study out of Denmark.

Researchers from the National Research Center for the Working Environment surveyed more than 70,000 employed wage earners between 2012 and 2018. The surveyed workers hadn't had a long-term sickness absence in the past 12 months. Long-term sickness absence was defined as a registered sickness for at least 30 days in a period of up to two years.

After adjusting for factors such as age, education, and sex, the researchers concluded that 12.8% of such absences before follow-up could have potentially been prevented had all respondents used micro-exercise. Additionally, a reduced risk of long-term sickness absence was observed when the respondents engaged in micro-exercise during work hours, but not after hours.

In trials of 10-15 minutes of micro-exercise with elastic resistance bands performed three times a week during work hours, the researchers also observed improved psychological and social factors, such as better social climate, feelings of vitality, and the ability to work together in teams.

Although long-term sickness absences account for three-quarters of total absence costs – including sickness benefit payments, lost productivity, lost earnings, and potential loss of paid employment – they constitute only a third of all lost working days, according to the study.

The researchers indicate that although micro-exercise opportunities during work hours increased among the respondents to 61% in 2018 from 54.3% in 2012, an opportunity for large-scale public health promotion of their value is being missed.

The study was [published online](#) Feb. 10 in the journal Nature.

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## LITTLE BITS OF FITNESS

Between work, family responsibilities, home maintenance, and all the other tasks that fill our days, it can be hard to find a block of time to set aside for exercise. For many people, this discouraging fact leads them to give up trying.

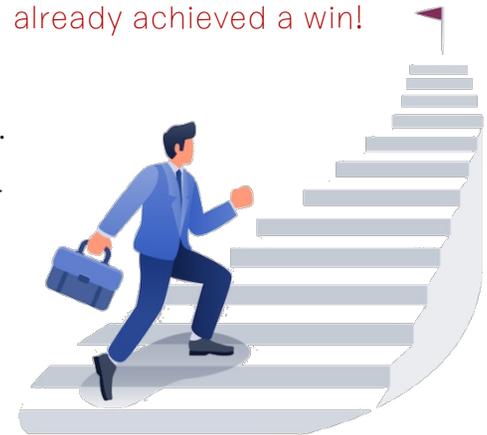
The solution? Set your bar lower! Not everyone has time, energy, or money for a gym membership, fitness class, or even a 30 minute walk. If your fitness goals don't fit into your lifestyle, and you can't (or aren't ready to) change your lifestyle, change your fitness goals.

Exercise doesn't have to be all-or-nothing – if you're currently doing nothing, any small amount of exercise is an improvement. Setting tiny, easily achievable goals for yourself throughout the day will make it easy to meet them. These “exercise snacks” create a positive feedback loop, giving your brain a little burst of dopamine as you complete each small task.

Micro-exercises can be done anywhere, any time, during any free moments you have, whether just a few seconds or several minutes.

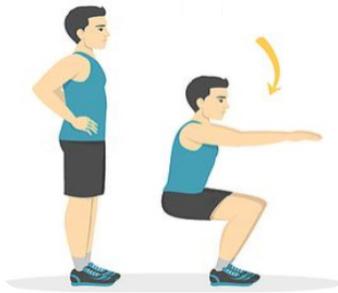
Set a timer to remind you to do a few micro-exercises at certain intervals throughout the day (some smart watches have this technology built in with “time to move” alerts). Or, try a task-based approach: make arm circles after reading your morning email; march in place while waiting for an online meeting to start; do some squats as your lunch heats up in the microwave. (Worried about looking silly? Think of what a great example you are setting for your coworkers. You're a hero!) Every tiny sliver of time can be used to add some exercise to your day, and every little bit counts!

Too the stairs instead of the elevator? See, you've already achieved a win!



# DON'T JUST SIT THERE!

Here are a few simple exercises you can do from the (relative) comfort of your own workspace:



## SQUATS

**HOW:** Stand with feet hip-width apart. (Beginners place a non-rolling chair behind you to keep you stable.) Put your arms out in front of you (either straight or bent). Inhale and engage your core. Putting the weight on your heels, bend at the hips and knees, keeping your knees over your toes at all times. Keep your back straight as you lower your body until your thighs are parallel with the floor (or your rear end touches the chair). Exhale as you return to a standing position. Do as many as you can at one time.

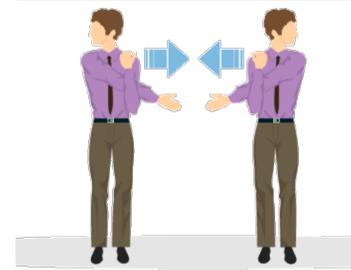
**WHY:** Squats engage almost all lower body muscles, as well as your core; they also improve mobility and range of motion and strengthen your joints.



## SEATED LEG EXTENSIONS

**HOW:** Sit on the edge of a sturdy chair and place your hands on either side of your hips to stable yourself. Extend right leg out straight while pointing your toes toward the ceiling; hold it for 5-10 seconds. Do the same with the left leg. Repeat as many times as you like. Alternately, relax your foot or point your toes straight out as you extend your leg.

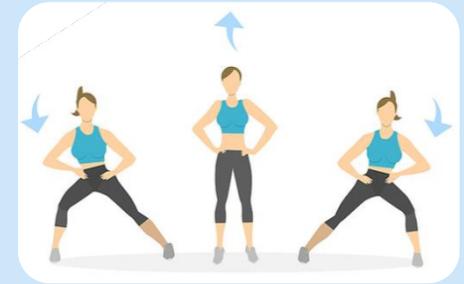
**WHY:** Pointing your toes toward the ceiling will stretch your calves and hamstrings; pointing your toes straight out will work your lower abdomen. Both exercises work your core and lower body muscles.



## SHOULDER STRETCHES

**HOW:** Stretch your right arm out across your body with your hand on the left side pointing to the floor. Bend your left forearm over the right arm above the elbow. Use your left forearm to pull your right arm close to your chest and hold for 20 seconds. Reverse the stretch and repeat.

**WHY:** Stretching your arms and shoulders can help reduce muscle tension and ward off back and neck pain that can occur when sitting or standing for long periods. It can also help maintain your range of motion, relieve stress, and improve your mood.



## LUNGES

**HOW:** Stand straight with your feet hip-width apart.

**For side lunges:** Step out to the side with your left leg, bending your knee as you transfer your weight to that leg. Keep your heels flat on the floor and your toes pointed forward. Use your left foot to push you back to the starting position. Repeat with the right leg.

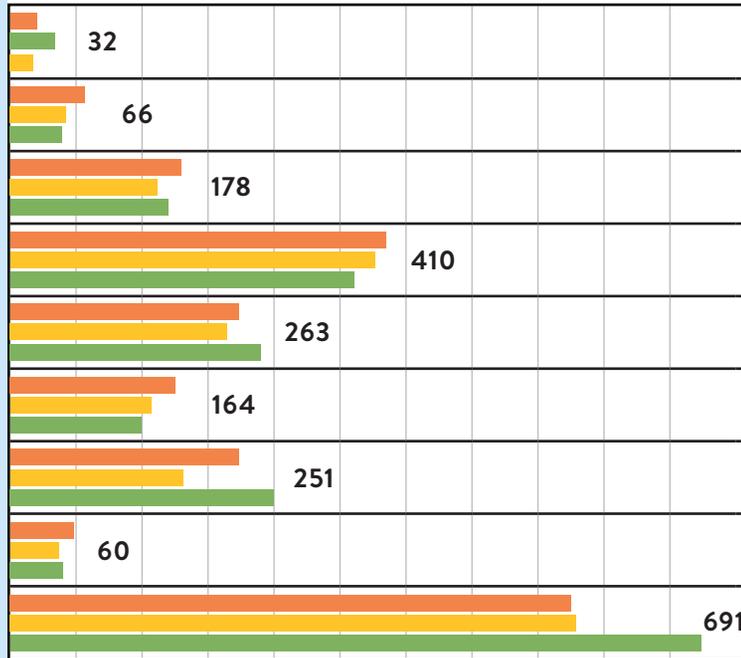
**For front lunges:** Step forward with your left foot and bend both knees, lowering until they are bent at 90° angles. Shift weight forward onto your left leg. Return to starting position. Repeat with the right leg.



**WHY:** Lunges work many lower body muscles in a single exercise and are beneficial for injury prevention and rehabilitation.

# OUTLOOK SNAPSHOT: STATE OF FLORIDA WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS BY CAUSE

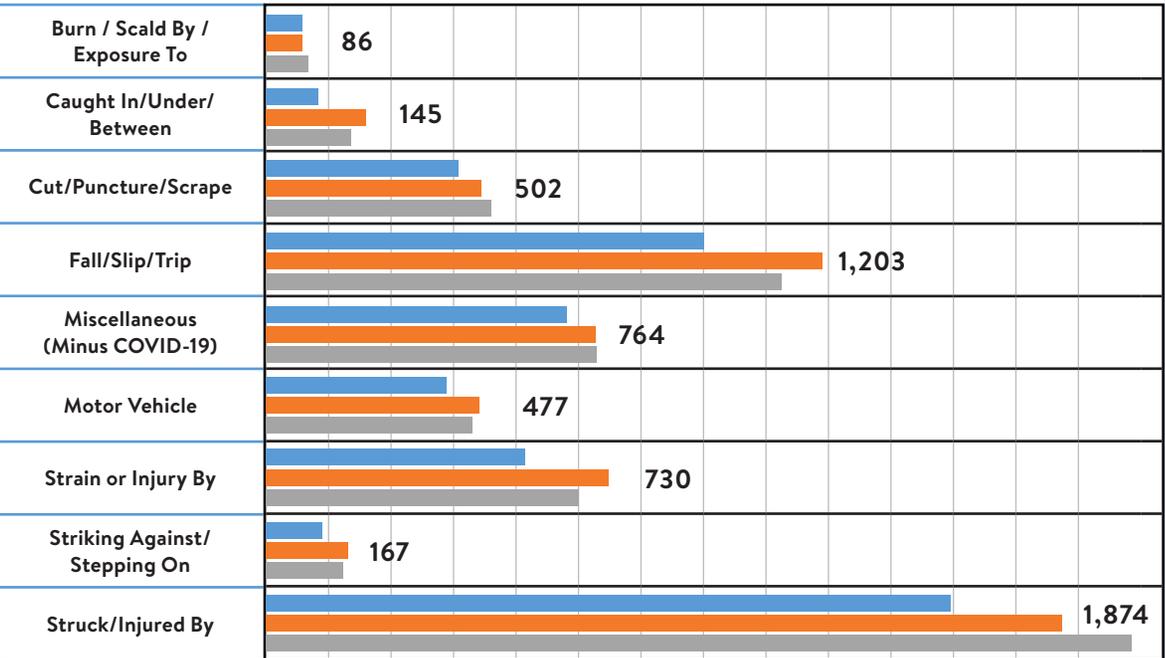
## THREE -MONTH OVERVIEW



■ JUNE
 ■ JULY
 ■ AUGUST



## THREE -QUARTER OVERVIEW

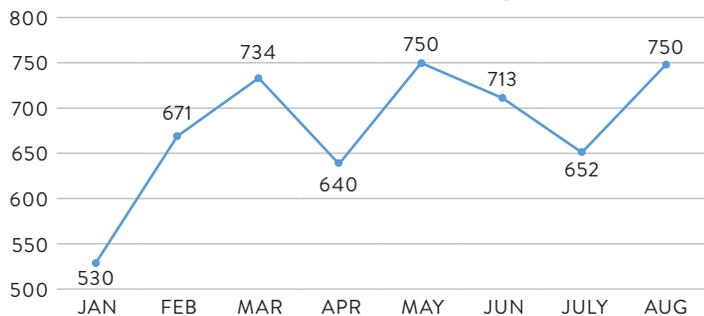


■ DECEMBER-FEBRUARY
 ■ MARCH-MAY
 ■ JUNE-AUGUST



COVID-19 (PANDEMIC)  
 398 1,841

### 2022 TOTAL CLAIMS (excluding COVID-19)



### TRENDS TO WATCH:

Total number of claims rose sharply between January & May; June & July claims trended downward in nearly every category. However, August erased those gains with a 15% increase in total claims, with large spikes in “BURN/SCALD BY/EXPOSURE TO”, “STRAIN OR INJURY BY”, and “STRUCK/INJURED BY” categories. “MISCELLANEOUS” claims also rose in August, a large portion of which were heat-related injuries.

(COVID-19 claims are categorized as “MISC—ABSORPTION/INGESTION/INHALATION” but have been separated out and are not included in the monthly totals on the main graph.)

Total Number of Claims	Including COVID-19	Excluding COVID-19
Dec 2021 - Feb 2022	3,131	1,750
Mar 2022 - May 2022	2,186 (↓ 30%)	2,124 (↑ 21%)
Jun 2022 - Aug 2022	2,513 (↑ 15%)	2,115 (↓ 0.4%)



## CDC STREAMLINES COVID-19 GUIDANCE WITH FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL RISK REDUCTION

On August 11, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention again updated their COVID-19 guidelines, focusing on preventing severe illness rather than slowing transmission of the virus. The changes come at a time when schools and offices around the country have reopened. The new guidelines shift much of the responsibility of risk reduction from these institutions to individuals and are the same for all, regardless of vaccination status.

### CURRENT RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES:

- Get vaccinated and stay up to date as new boosters become available.
- Those exposed to COVID-19 no longer need to quarantine and should instead wear a high-quality mask for 10 days and get tested on day 5.
- If you have COVID-19 symptoms, isolate until you receive negative test results.
- If you test positive:
  - » Isolate from others (including those in your own home) for at least 5 days (as this is typically the most infectious period), and wear a high-quality mask if you must be around others.
  - » You may end isolation after day 5 if you are fever-free (without medication) for 24 hours and symptoms are improving (or if you never had symptoms).
  - » Avoid being around those more likely to have severe illness from COVID-19 until at least day 11.
  - » Wear a high-quality mask through day 10.
  - » Those with moderate or severe illness should isolate through day 10.
  - » If your symptoms return or worsen after ending isolation, restart isolation at day 0. (Some people experience rebound illness after taking the antiviral treatment Paxlovid.)
- Testing of asymptomatic people without known exposures is no longer recommended in most community settings.
- The CDC emphasizes that physical distance is just one component of how to protect yourself and others and no longer recommends keeping six feet of distance in all situations.
- For students: The CDC no longer recommends a “test to stay” approach for unvaccinated students who are exposed, nor does it recommend “cohorting” (dividing students into smaller groups to limit contact between them).
- For institutions: The CDC emphasizes the importance of improving indoor air quality by upgrading ventilation. (See the [July-Sept 2021 issue of OUTLOOK](#) for more info re. indoor air quality.)
- Actions should continue to be informed by [community infection levels](#), as well as risk levels for specific situations, locations, and individuals.

For more information about COVID-19 in Florida, visit [Florida Health’s COVID-19 Response website](#).



## E-Learning

from the

DIVISION OF RISK MANAGEMENT

The safety training required per section 284.50, F.S. for all newly appointed safety and alternate safety coordinators, previously available solely in webinar format, is now being provided through online training modules available at your convenience.

PEOPLE  
FIRST



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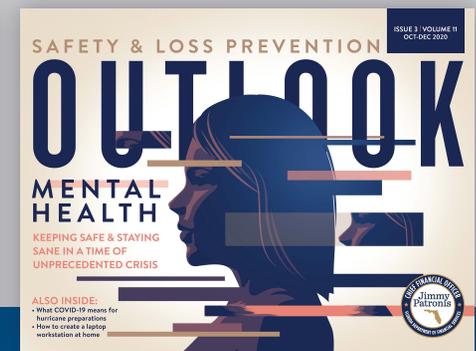
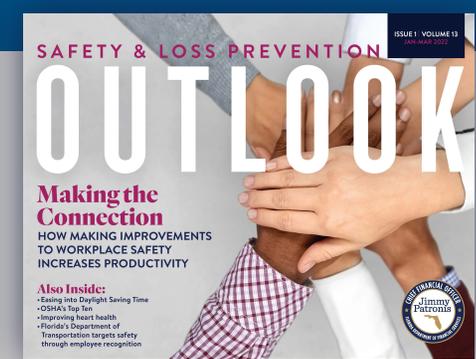
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