



SAFE LIFTING AND HANDLING TECHNIQUES

GOAL

This brochure is designed to provide the basics that are necessary to avoid back injuries while lifting and moving objects. This brochure includes the Eight Steps to Safe Lifting and Back Safety Tips.

OBJECTIVE

To prevent back injuries by utilizing safe lifting methods. By adopting the lifting techniques in this pamphlet, and avoiding known hazards, employees can prevent back injuries from occurring.

SAFE LIFTING TECHNIQUES

There are eight steps to performing a lift in a safe manner:

1. Size up the load.
2. Plan the job.
3. Establish a base support.
4. Bend your knees.
5. Get a good grip.
6. Keep the load close.
7. Lift with your legs.
8. Pivot; don't twist.

SIZE UP THE LOAD

Always assess the object before lifting it. Make sure the load is stable and balanced. Carefully and slowly put force against the object to determine its weight. **IF IT IS TOO HEAVY, GET HELP!**

PLAN THE JOB

Plan a route that is free of tripping and slipping hazards. Ensure that the planned route allows for easy travel. Know where the object will be unloaded and plan for rest stop if necessary. Think through the lift - lift the load in your mind. Face the object you are about to lift and, if possible, face the direction you want to go. **DO NOT TWIST YOUR BODY.**

ESTABLISH BASE OF SUPPORT

Make sure you have a firm footing. Keep your feet at least shoulder width apart. A staggered stance, with one foot slightly behind the other, often helps provide a firm base of support.

BEND YOUR KNEES

Bend at your knees, not at your waist. Bend or squat down as far as necessary using your legs and not your back. Tuck your chin in toward your chest. This will help keep your back straight. In this position, your knees are bent and your back is straight from your hips to your shoulders, as if you were in a sitting position.

GET A GOOD GRIP

Place your hands at opposite sides of the object. Grip the load firmly, using your whole hand, not just your fingers. Pull your elbows in close to your body.

KEEP THE LOAD CLOSE

Keep the load close to your body. The closer it is to your spine, the less force it exerts on your back. Maintain the natural curve of your lower back. Keep your back upright. Whether you are lifting or putting down a load, do not add the weight of your body to the load. **10 POUNDS AT ARMS LENGTH IS LIKE LIFTING 100 POUNDS.**

LIFT WITH YOUR LEGS

Lift with your legs to allow your body's powerful leg muscles to do the work. Flex your knees and hips, not your back.

AVOID BENDING AT THE WAIST !

PIVOT; DON'T TWIST

Don't twist your body when moving objects that have already been lifted. Pivot your feet and turn your entire body in the direction of movement.

BACK SAFETY TIPS

- ☞ If an object is too big to lift, and weight is not a factor, push the object instead of pulling it. Lean into the object and let your body weight and thigh muscles do the work. Pushing out is less strain on the back.
- ☞ Keep loads out of the danger zone by keeping the load between shoulder and knuckle height. Working in the danger zone increase the chance of injury.
- ☞ Plan rest stops along your route. Muscle fatigue increase the risk of injury.
- ☞ Lower the load slowly, by bending your knees and hips. After releasing the load straighten up using your legs. Remember, you can injure yourself putting a load down as well as picking it up.
- ☞ Choose the safest and quickest route to your destination. Avoid stairs and other areas that provide poor footing if at all possible. If you must use stairways, get help and use equipment designed for moving up and down stairways when possible.
- ☞ Don't reach over a surface to pick up an object. If you can't get closer to the object, slide it toward you.
- ☞ Tighten the abdominal muscles (stomach) to give added support to the spine. This will help you offset the force of the load.
- ☞ Don't obstruct your view by stacking objects too high. This is of the quickest routes to an injury.
- ☞ Keep the worksite clean in order to avoid slipping or tripping hazards. Good housekeeping eliminates a lot of unnecessary injuries.
- ☞ Don't twist. Twisting is one of the most damaging movements for the back. When bending is added, the two multiply the risk of a back injury substantially
- ☞ Move the load in a smooth motion. Don't use jerky movement. Jerky movements not only increase the chance of strain or sprain, but also may throw you off balance.
- ☞ Walk using short steps with your feet far enough apart to maintain a good balance.
- ☞ Break large loads into smaller loads whenever possible.
- ☞ Use assistive devices such as: dollies, winches, pulleys, forklifts, etc. when at all possible. These devices will help reduce the possibility of back injuries.

and

THINK before you lift !!!!