

FactSheet Lifting and Back Safety

Back injuries are one of the most common types of occupational injuries according to the National Safety Council. It states that, "Once a back injury occurs, you are three to five times more likely to experience subsequent injuries. It's important to know how to protect your back when lifting."

Prepare for the lift and employ proper lift techniques to greatly reduce or eliminate back injuries.

Prepare For Lifting

- Warm up or stretch prior to attempting to lift a heavy object.
- Wear gloves if needed to grip the object firmly. Gloves may also prevent scrapes and cuts.
- Wear shoes appropriate for the task being performed.

Size Up the Load and Work Area

- Assess the load before you lift.
 - If the load is heavy or clumsy, get a mechanical aid (i.e. dolly / push cart) or help from a coworker.
 - If the weight of the object is unknown, test the weight of the object to determine if it can be safely lifted.
 - Divide large loads into smaller ones, if possible.
 - Check for rough edges or abnormalities that could affect your grip.
- Make sure that you have a safe path to carry the load.
 - Aisles must be kept clear to prevent accidents.
 - Wet or slippery areas must be remediated before use.
 - Make sure you have a clear place to set down the object.

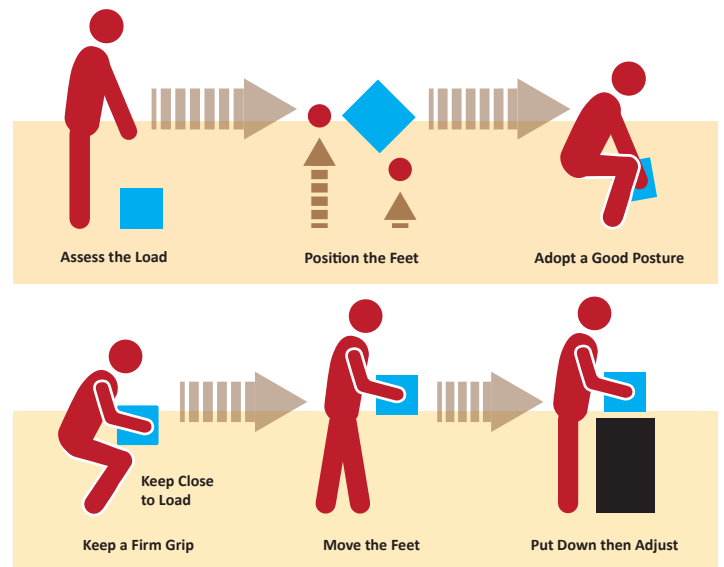
Lift Safely

- Keep your feet apart.
- Get a good grip on the load and keep elbows slightly bent and tucked in.
- Keep the object as close to you as possible.
- Place your feet close to the object and center yourself over the load.
- Keep your back straight and tighten your core during the lift.

What I need to do...

- ✓ Warm up before attempting to lift.
- ✓ Keep my back straight and lift by extending my legs.
- ✓ Obtain a dolly, pallet jack, or other mechanical device to assist in lifting.

- Lift with the legs; look straight ahead before and during your lift.
- Do not bend at the waist or twist. If you must turn, turn with your feet, not your body.
- Set the load down properly using the same principles.



Additional Information

OSHA Back Disorders and Injuries

https://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_vii/otm_vii_1.html

A Back Injury Prevention Guide for Health Care Providers

https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/backinj.pdf

OSHA Safety and Health Topics: Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders in the Workplace <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/>