

SAFE LIFTING

If you have ever suffered from back pain, you understand how debilitating it can be. Preventing a back injury is much easier than repairing one, and proper lifting is the key to prevention.

Steps for Proper Lifting

STEP 1 Assess the Load. Ask Yourself:

- Is mechanical help needed and/or available?
- Can I lift this alone?
- Can I divide the load to make it lighter and less cumbersome?

STEP 2 Assess Your Surrounding Environment. Ask Yourself:

- Is the path clear?
- Is my footing firm?
- What's my destination? Is there a place to set something down?

TIPS

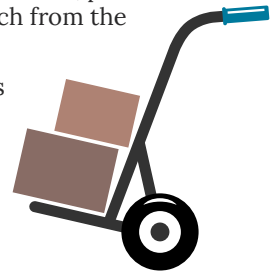
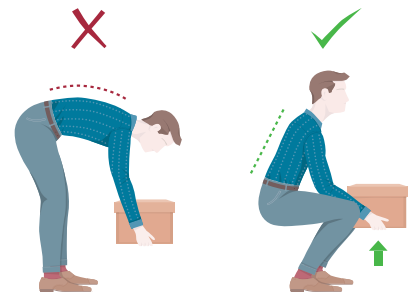
STEP 3 Prepare to Lift

- Tuck your pelvis by tightening your stomach muscles, which will help keep your back in balance when you lift. Tucking in your chin also helps you remember to keep your back straight.
- Stand close to the load with your feet shoulder-width apart. Using a wide stance helps to stabilize your body.
- Squat down, bending at the hip and the knee—NOT at the waist or back. This helps keep your center of balance and allows the strong muscles to do the lifting.
- Hug the load. Keep your arms and elbows close to your body. Holding the object close to you puts less pressure on your body.
- Slowly lift by straightening your legs. Avoid twisting, which can overload your spine and lead to injury. Make sure your feet, knees, and torso are pointed in the same direction while lifting.
- Remember to breathe. If you must hold your breath, the object you're lifting is too heavy.



Putting the Item Down

- Use the same steps when setting the load down.



Did You Know?

- According to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, over 80% of people will suffer from a back injury in their lifetime that requires medical attention.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than one million workers suffer back injuries each year, and back injuries account for one of every five workplace injuries or illnesses.
- Objects held at arm's length weigh the equivalent of 10 times more than the objects actual weight!



Keep Your Back in Shape

Having a healthy lifestyle is a good start. Get plenty of rest, eat right, and exercise to keep the muscles in your back strong and flexible.

- Maintain a healthy weight - being over weight puts added stress on your lower back.
- Avoid smoking - both smoke and nicotine cause your spine to age faster than normal.
- Maintain good posture - proper posture is important for avoiding future back problems.

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