

## SAFE LIFTING TIPS

Many jobs require frequent lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, lowering and raising materials by hand. These jobs tasks are often referred to as manual material handling. The human body is not designed to lift heavy loads. The amount of weight you lift and the way you carry and move it play a big role in preventing a back injury. The following tips can help make manual material handling safer.

- Warm up
- Think before you lift
- Position your feet
- Position your body
- Get a firm grip
- Lift smoothly
- Move your feet
- Carrying the load
- Setting the load down
- Pushing and pulling the load

- **Warm up**

Athletes warm up before a workout to reduce the risk of injury. You should warm up your muscles to meet the demands of the physical stress of lifting and manual material handling. Warm up to reduce the likelihood of pulling, straining or cramping a part of your body.

- **"Think Before You Lift"**



Test the load.



Use a dolly.

Plan the lift by testing the weight of what you are preparing to lift. Know where you are going before you lift and ask for help if the load is too heavy or awkwardly shaped. Use a dolly or split the load into smaller loads to lighten the load.

- **Position your feet**



**Unsafe: Get closer to the load**



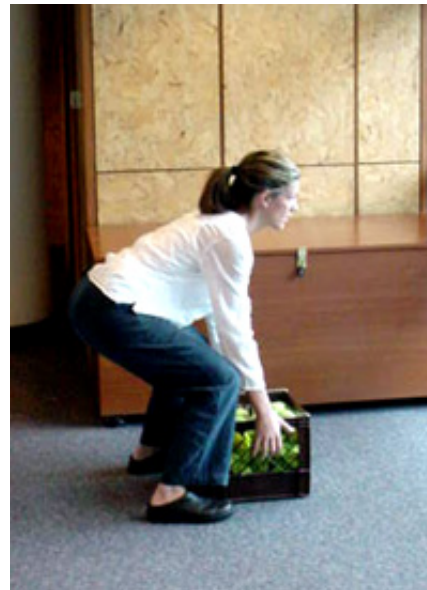
**Safer : Close to load with feet apart**

Get close to the load you plan to lift. Place your feet wide apart giving yourself a balanced and stable base. Face the direction you intend to move.

- **Position your body**



**Unsafe: Do not bend at waist**



**Safer: Bend hips and knees**

Lifting from the floor is hard on your low back. When lifting the load from a low level, do not bend over at the waist. Bend your hips and knees and keep the curves in your back aligned.



**Unsafe: Don't lift over shoulders**



**Safer: Place item on lower shelf**

Lifting above your shoulders is hard on your arms and back. If possible, reduce the amount of weight being lifted by removing some of the contents of the box or container. Try using a step stool or ladder to get closer to the target area, instead of lifting above your shoulders. If possible, place the item on a lower shelf.



**Unsafe: Don't bend at waist**



**Safer: Stoop down on one knee**



**Safer: Get a good grip before standing up**

You can also lower your body down on one knee and glide the object up into your body to get a good grip before pushing your body upward.

- **Get a firm grip**



**Grip the load**



**Rest the load midway**



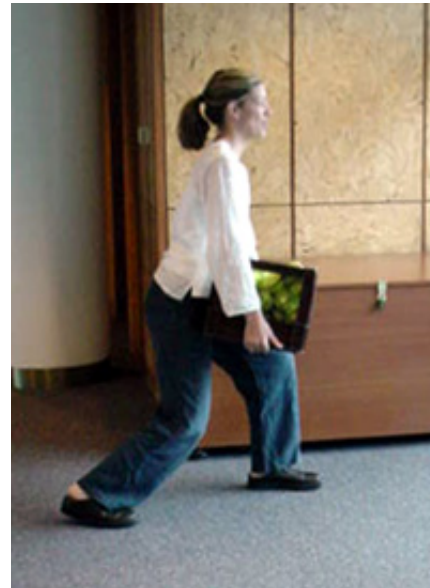
**Use a step ladder**

Grip the load securely and try to keep your arms within the boundary formed by your legs. This positioning helps keep the load close to the body. For a long lift, such as floor to shoulder height, consider resting the load mid-way on a table or bench to change your grip.

- **Lift smoothly**



**Unsafe: Do not bend at waist**



**Safer: Lift with your legs**

Keep your back straight, tighten your stomach muscles and lift using your leg muscles. Take your time. Make the lifting motion smooth rather than sudden and jerky.

If you must lift the load above your shoulders, spread your feet apart with one in front of the other. Keep your elbows close to your body, tighten your stomach muscles and do not arch your low back as you lift above your shoulders.



Spread your legs and tighten your stomach muscles

- **Move your feet**



Unsafe: Don't twist while lifting



Safer: Turn your feet and shoulders

Avoid twisting as you lift. The low back is not designed to twist and twisting while lifting increases the strain on your back. Instead, turn your shoulders and feet and keep the load in front of you at all times.

- **Carrying the load**



**Safer: Keep the load close to your body**



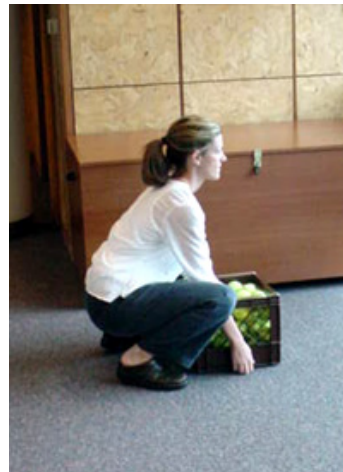
**Safer: Balance the load**

Keep the load as close to your body as possible. If you are carrying two objects of the same weight (e.g. cans of paint) carrying one in each hand will help balance the load, as long as the weight is reasonable. Use a hand truck or other assistive device if transporting the load for a distance.

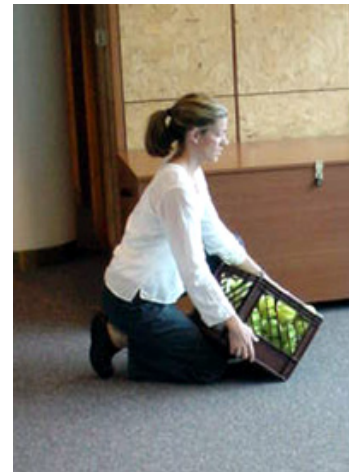
- **Setting the load down**



**Unsafe: Don't bend at waist**



**Safer: Bend your legs**



**Safer: Slide the load down from one knee**

Set the load down using your leg muscles. Do not bend over at your waist. Slide the load into position, if necessary.

- **Pushing and pulling the load**



**Unsafe: Push instead of pull**



**Safer: Pushing is easier than pulling**

Pushing is generally easier on your back than pulling. If you must pull, keep the cart or container at your side to avoid extending your arm behind you and arching your low back.