

Do's and Don'ts of Lifting

Is lifting part of your job routine? If so, then every day you risk injury from strains, sprains, hernias, cuts, and bruises. All it takes is one wrong move to injure yourself. Thousands of on-the-job injuries are related to improper body movement due to lifting procedures.

You can prevent injuring yourself by learning proper lifting techniques. A back injury can keep you from the regular activities you enjoy. Remember, your back is supporting you and the load you are carrying.

Do's of Lifting

Think before you lift! Before you begin, know the right way to do the job. Check first with your supervisor if you have any questions about moving a load.

Always size up the load. Get help for heavy or bulky objects.

Inspect your path. Be wary of stairs, curbs, or other tripping or slipping hazards. Chose the flattest, straightest, and clearest route before your lift the object, even if it is a little longer.

Be sure of a firm grip. Check the object you are going to lift for nails and sharp edges. If the load is wet or slippery, wipe it off.

Make sure the weight of the object is stable and distributed evenly if possible.

Stand close to the object with legs at shoulder-width stance. Bend at the hips and knees into a squatting position, keeping the feet flat. Check your footing. Pull the load close to your body.

Lift with your legs, not your back. Squat down close to the load, keep your back straight, and lift slowly using "leg power".

Use material handling equipment whenever possible. Proper use of hand trucks and dollies can save a lot of manual effort.

When two people are lifting, designate one person to direct the lift.

When unloading, do face the spot you have chosen it and lower the load slowly by bending your knees. Don't bend over.

Keep your fingers away from the bottom of the load.

Don'ts of Lifting

Avoid heavy lifting if you have had previous joint injuries, are underweight or overweight, or have any medical problems such as heart disease or high blood pressure.

Never lift more than you can easily handle.

Never reach over your shoulders to lift. Instead, use a step stool or platform.

Never lift with a rounded back and straight legs.

Avoid twisting your body when lifting or when carrying. Move your feet to change direction.

Never look down when lifting.