

GUIDE TO SAFE LIFTING

Lifting is so much a part of everyday jobs that most of us don't think about it. It is often done incorrectly, resulting in pulled or strained muscles, disc injuries, or hernias.

Mental Lifting

To handle materials safely, lift everything twice. First, lift the load mentally. Plan every step before you do it physically. Have you determined the weight of the load to avoid attempting a lift which requires additional mechanical or manual help?

Feet/Stance

Get a firm footing, keeping your feet apart for a stable stance. Stand close to the load with one foot alongside the object being lifted and one behind.

Bend Your Knees

Do not bend at the waist. Use the sit-down (squatting) position, keeping the back straight. Straight does not mean vertical. During the lift, a straight back keeps the spine and muscles in alignment. Tuck in the chin so the neck and head continue the straight back line. Tucking the chin also helps keep the spine straight and firm.

Position Yourself

Always use a palm grip. Extend fingers and hands around the object you are going to lift, using the full palm. Hold load close to your body. When the arms are held away from your body, they lose much of their strength, and in turn, put unneeded strain on your back. The body should be positioned so that its weight is centered over the feet.

The Lift

Start the lift with the thrust of the rear foot. Continue keeping load close to your body by tucking arms and elbows in. **NEVER TWIST when lifting or carrying an object.** Simply turn the forward foot out, pointing it in the direction of travel. Twisting while lifting or carrying is one of the most common causes of back injury.

Basic Steps Reviewed:

1. Feet parted – one alongside, one behind the object.
2. Keep back straight in alignment.
3. Chin tucked in.
4. Grip object with whole hand.
5. Elbows and arms tucked in.
6. Body weight directly over feet.
7. Never twist when lifting or carrying.

Safety Tip: When lifting from a height above your shoulder, limit yourself to a light load or stand on a sturdy, steady platform to bring your shoulders above the load. Otherwise, ask for help. Test weight by pushing up against load before picking it up.

EIGHT STEPS TO A SAFE LIFT

1. **SIZE UP THE LOAD** – Always think before you lift. Is it stable and balanced? Push against it. If it's too heavy, get help; mechanical or a co-worker.
2. **PLAN THE JOB** – Plan and route the job so there is not any slip or trip hazard in your pathway.
3. **ESTABLISH BASE OF SUPPORT** – Feet should be at least shoulder width apart. One in front of the other. Stand close to load.
4. **BEND YOUR KNEES** – Use your knees, not your waist. Keep you back straight when picking up load and setting it down.
5. **GET A GOOD GRIP** – Use your entire hand. Hold load close to your body.
6. **KEEP THE LOAD CLOSE** – Do not reach to lift.
7. **LIFT WITH YOUR LEGS** – Lift with your legs when picking up load and setting it down.
8. **PIVOT; DON'T TWIST** – Pivot with your feet, not your back.

When you lift...

DO...

1. Plant your feet firmly – get a stable base.
2. Bend at your knees – not your waist.
3. Tighten your abdominal muscles to support your spine.
4. Get a good grip – use both hands.
5. Keep the load close to your body.
6. Use your leg muscles as you lift.
7. Keep your back upright; keep it in its natural posture.
8. Lift steadily and smoothly without jerking.
9. Breathe - If you must hold your breath to lift it, the load is too heavy.



DO NOT...

1. Lift from the floor.
2. Twist and lift.
3. Lift with one hand (unbalanced).
4. Lift loads across obstacles.
5. Lift while reaching or stretching.
6. Lift from an uncomfortable posture.
7. Fight to recover a dropped object.
8. Hold your breath while lifting – **GET HELP.**

