

PREVENTING BACK INJURIES

A Guide to Keeping your Back
Healthy

Proper Techniques for Lifting & Carrying Objects

- Keep your feet apart, one slightly ahead of the other
- Bend your knees and squat down
- Keep your back arched and your head up
- Keep objects close to your body
- Do not rush, jerk, or twist your body
- Keep correct posture- do not stoop or walk in a bent over manner
- Carry load to the front and close to your body
- If the object is too heavy, ASK FOR HELP!

Have You Checked the Weight of the Object Before You Tried to Lift it?

- Test every load you are about to lift by pushing the object lightly with your hands or feet
- Remember, a small package does not always mean a light load!

Is the Load You Want to Lift Packed Correctly?

- Make sure the weight is balanced and packed so its contents will not move around
- Loose contents inside a package can cause accidents if the package becomes unbalanced

Is it Easy to Grip this Load?

- Be sure to have a tight grip on the object before you lift it!
- Handles applied to the object will help you lift it safely

Is it Easy to Reach This Load?

- You can be injured if you arch your back when lifting an object over your head
- To avoid hurting your back, use a ladder when you are lifting something over your head

What is the Best Way to Pick Up an Object?

- Use slow and smooth movements
- Keep your body facing the object while you lift it
- Keep the load close to your body
- Lift with your legs, not your back
- Carry the load in the space between your shoulders and your waist

How Can I Avoid Back Injuries?

- Pace yourself- Take many small breaks!
- Don't over do it- Don't try to lift something too heavy for you!
- Have enough room to lift safely- Clean a space around an object before you lift it!
- Look around before you lift- And make sure you look while you are carrying!
- Avoid walking on slippery or uneven surfaces!
- Don't rely on a back belt to protect you- It has not been proven that they are preventive to back injuries!
- Get help before you try to lift a heavy load- Have plenty of friends around to help!

Lifting Do's and Don'ts

- DO maintain proper posture
- DO bend at the knees
- DO keep the object close to your body
- DO divide a heavy load into a smaller load
- DO use a dolly or pushcart whenever possible
- DO NOT bend at the waist
- DO NOT pull an object-Push it!
- DO NOT lift objects that obscure your vision or footing

Body Management

- Stretch first if you know you are about to be doing work that may be hard on your back
- Slow down if you are doing a lot of heavy, repetitive lifting. Allow breaks in between lifting multiple items
- Rest your back. Take frequent breaks. Stretch again.
- Sleep on a firm mattress
- Get in shape. Strengthen your stomach muscles, lose a little weight, and increase your back's flexibility