



## Lifting Safety Tips

Most work-related back injuries are strains or sprains caused by improper lifting or carrying of loads. By planning how to lift and transport a load, workers can reduce most back injuries.

### Proper Manual Lifting Techniques

- Assess the load to see if you will need help. Slide loads when possible.
- Wear sturdy boots or shoes with nonslip soles.
- Get a firm footing. Then part your feet and put one foot slightly in front of the other.
- Keep the load close to the body and directly in front of you.
- Keep your back as straight as possible. Bend at the knees and lift with the legs, when possible.
- Get a good grip on the object. Use handles when possible and make sure gloves fit properly.
- Avoid lifting loads higher than chest high.
- Don't toss objects weighing more than five pounds.
- Lift in a smooth, controlled manner. Don't jerk the load or twist your body.

### Other Tips

- Use mechanical lifting devices like forklifts, loaders and overhead cranes.
- Use manual lifting aids, such as dollies or hand trucks.
- Know when to ask for help. If you suspect a load weighs 50 pounds or more, do NOT lift it alone.
- Avoid prolonged periods of lifting.

### Hazards of Lifting

- Back injuries from lifting heavy or bulky objects
- Strains and sprains from improper lifting or from carrying loads that are too large or too heavy
- Being struck by materials or caught in pinch points
- Cuts due to cutting ties incorrectly

### When Moving Materials Manually:

- Attach handles or holders to loads.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Seek help when a load is so bulky that it cannot properly be grasped or lifted, when you can't see around it or can't handle it safely.

### When Moving Materials Mechanically:

- Be aware of safe equipment operating techniques. Ensure the equipment-rated capacity is displayed on each piece of mechanical equipment used for lifting and the capacity is not exceeded.
- Avoid overloading a lift truck. It can cause tipping.
- Do not place extra weight on the rear of a counterbalanced forklift to allow an overload.
- When picking up items, center the load on the forks as close to the mast as possible to prevent truck tipping or the load falling.
- Adjust loads to the lowest position when traveling.
- Follow operational requirements of the truck manufacturer.

Source: Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Safety tips developed based on generally accepted safety standards believed to be reliable at the date of publication. Information is for general guidance only and should not be relied upon for legal compliance purposes.

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