



Safe Lifting Techniques

Protective Insurance, the National Safety Council and various other safety and medical organizations recommend using the following techniques to perform a safe lift to prevent injuries.



Before you lift, inspect your intended path of travel for obstacles or other possible hazards. Make sure that you have a clear path to carry the load, can see where you are going, and have a clear area to set it down.

Size up the load before you lift it. Test the weight by moving a corner of the object and decide whether you can handle it alone or if you need help.

Get a firm footing. Place your feet shoulders' width apart with one foot slightly forward of the other.

Bend at your knees, not your waist, to get your legs and feet ready to support the load. This is the single most important part of lifting.

Straighten your legs to lift straight up in a slow, smooth motion.

Keep the load close to your body. For greater strength and stability, lift and carry the object near your waist.

Move your feet when changing directions. Turning with your upper body while carrying the load causes strains.

Bend your knees again as you lower the load.

Ask for help for lifting items that are long, bulky, don't have a good place to grip or are too heavy for one person. If you have to strain to carry the load, you need assistance.

Know when mechanical lifting equipment, such as a dolly or forklift, should be used. Follow company guidelines for your personal lifting weight limits.

If possible, divide a heavy load into several smaller ones.

If possible, avoid walking on slippery, uneven surfaces while carrying any load.

Don't rely on a back belt to protect your back. When used improperly, they can actually damage your back.

Let your leg muscles do the work. They are stronger than any other muscle in your body.

Do not arch your back. This makes the nerve roots open to pinching and cause strains in weaker muscles.

FOR LOADS REQUIRING TWO PEOPLE TO LIFT:

Designate a leader in advance.

Plan the lift and use all safe lifting procedures.

Lift and lower in unison and with no sudden moves.

Communicate with your partner during the entire move.