

Back Injury Prevention - Proper Lifting Technique



Here's How:

- 1. Plan ahead before lifting.**
Knowing what you're doing and where you're going will prevent you from making awkward movements while holding something heavy. Clear a path, and if lifting something with another person, make sure both of you agree on the plan.
- 2. Lift close to your body.**
You will be a stronger and more stable lifter if the object is held close to your body rather than at the end of your reach. Make sure you have a firm hold on the object you are lifting, and keep it balanced close to your body.
- 3. Feet shoulder width apart.**
A solid base of support is important while lifting. Holding your feet too close together will be unstable, too far apart will hinder movement. Keep the feet about shoulder width apart and take short steps.
- 4. Bend your knees and keep your back straight.**
Practice the lifting motion before you lift the object, and think about your motion before you lift. Focus on keeping your spine straight--raise and lower to the ground by bending your knees.
- 5. Tighten your stomach muscles.**
Tightening your abdominal muscles will hold your back in a good lifting position and will help prevent excessive force on the spine.
- 6. Slowly lift with your legs.**
Your legs are many times stronger than your back muscles--let your strength work in your favor. Again, lower to the ground by bending your knees, not your back. Keeping your eyes focused upwards helps to keep your back straight.
- 7. If you're straining, get help.**
If an object is too heavy, or awkward in shape, make sure you have someone around who can help you lift.
- 8. Set down your load carefully,** squatting with the knees and hips only.

Tips:

- 1. Never bend your back to pick something up.**
It's just not worth the damage that improper lifting technique can cause.
- 2. Hold the object close to your body.**
You are a much more stable lifter if you're not reaching for an object.
- 3. Never jerk, twist or bend.**
Face in the direction you are walking. If you need to turn, stop, turn in small steps, and then continue walking.
- 4. Keep your eyes up.**
Looking slightly upwards will help you maintain a better position of the spine.
- 5. Wear shoes with non-slip soles.**