

# Back care—Basic lifting

## Explain dangers

Some jobs involve a lot of manual lifting. This can cause back, neck, and shoulder injuries.

The risk of injury increases when:

- Lifting in cramped spaces
- Lifting while in awkward positions
- Lifting heavy or irregular-shaped objects
- Performing repetitive lifting tasks.

If not addressed, these types of injuries can become so severe that you may not be able to do your job anymore.

## Identify controls

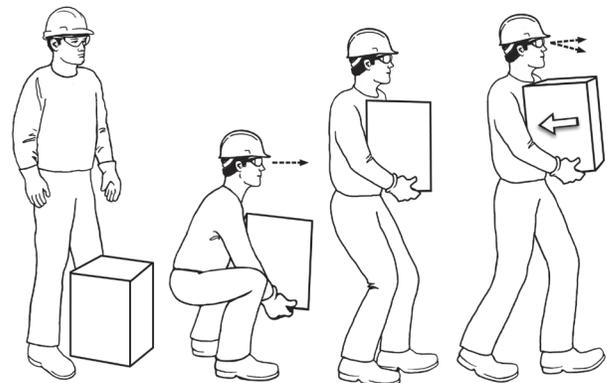
- Safe lifting starts with planning:
  - Size up the load before you start to lift.
  - Get help from a co-worker if you cannot handle the load by yourself.
  - Use a dolly or other type of material handling equipment whenever you can.
  - Store heavier materials closer to the work location to reduce the distance you will need to carry it.
  - Make sure the path you will travel with the load is clear.
- Avoid lifting above shoulder height. This causes your back to arch and puts a lot of stress on your shoulder and on the small joints in your spine.
- Avoid storing items on the floor. Store them between knee-height and shoulder-height. This prevents you from reaching overhead or bending at the waist.
- Push rather than pull a load. Pushing lets you maintain the normal curve in your back and puts less stress on the spine.
- Split large, heavy loads into smaller loads. Making more trips with smaller loads puts less stress on your back.
- Don't try to catch falling objects. Your muscles may not have time to coordinate properly to protect your spine.

## Demonstrate

### LIFTING PROCEDURE

Demonstrate the proper lifting procedure below as you talk.

1. **Get as close to the load as possible.** This is very important. Our lifting capacity is reduced the further away we are from the load.
2. Put yourself in the best possible position for the lift. Try to avoid twisting from the waist, reaching out, and leaning over material or equipment when you lift.
3. Use a well-balanced stance with one foot slightly ahead of the other.
4. Tighten your stomach muscles as you start to lift.
5. Keep your lower back in its normal curved position and use your legs to lift.
6. Pick up your feet and pivot to turn. Don't twist your back.
7. When lowering the load, maintain the curve in your lower back. **You can hurt your back just as easily lowering a load as lifting it.**



### TWO-PERSON LIFTING PROCEDURE

Partners should be roughly the same height. Before the lift, both partners should agree on:

- the type of lift (waist-high, shoulder-high, etc.)
- who will take charge
- how they will lower the load.