

Back care—Basic lifting

List lifting hazards on site.

Explain dangers

Some jobs involve a lot of manual lifting.

- Back, neck, and shoulder injuries are common.
- Manual lifting in cramped or awkward conditions increases the risk of injury.

Identify controls

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.

Don't try to catch falling objects. Your muscles may not have time to coordinate properly to protect your spine.

Push rather than pull. Pushing lets you maintain the normal curves in your back and puts less stress on the spine.

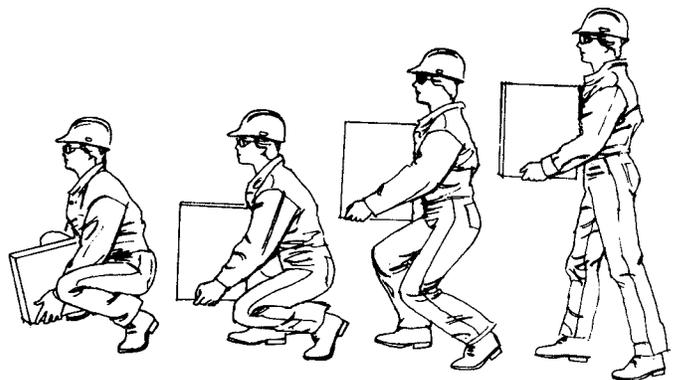
Safe lifting starts with planning.

- Size up the load.
- Make sure the path is clear.
- Get help if you need it.
- Use a dolly or other materials handling equipment whenever you can.

Demonstrate

Demonstrate as you talk.

- **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.
- 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.
- Use a well-balanced stance with one foot slightly ahead of the other.
- Tighten your stomach muscles as you start to lift.
- Keep your lower back in its normal curved position and use your legs to lift.
- Pick up your feet and pivot to turn. Don't twist your back.
- Lower 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 lift

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.