



GO Ergo!

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Proper Lifting: It Does a Body Good!

Since lifting is a part of many occupations and our everyday lives, we often do it without much consideration. However, lifting in the wrong way can cause serious pain and long-term injury. The next time you need to pick up or move an object, first stop and think about good lifting principles.

Lifting won't put your back at risk if you use the proper techniques. Here are some lifting tips to keep you safe and healthy as you work:

- ❖ Bend at your knees, not at your waist.
- ❖ Squat and lift up with your legs to pick up items off the floor.
- ❖ While lifting, keep items close to your body. Reaching outward puts stress on your lower back.
- ❖ Avoid turning at the waist. To turn, pivot your entire body.
- ❖ When lifting oversized objects, ask a coworker for assistance.
- ❖ Carry loads between shoulder and knuckle height.
- ❖ Keep your footing firm and make sure your intended path is clear before attempting to carry a load.
- ❖ Maintain proper body position and lifting mechanics throughout the entire lift.

Know Your Weight Limit

Before you attempt to lift an item, size up the weight of the load. If you suspect you cannot comfortably handle the load alone, do not risk an injury – ask a co-worker for assistance.

- First, both of you should decide in advance how to handle the load. Check the route and clearance.
- One person should be the leader and in a position to observe and direct the other. When lifting and lowering, move in unison.
- Do not let the load drop suddenly without warning the other person.
- Break the load into smaller, more manageable loads if possible.
- If available, use a dolly or lift as an aid.





Back Belt Use

Many experts believe that wearing a back belt can help reduce the risk of lower back injuries when combined with good lifting practices. If you decide a back belt will help with work-related tasks, choose the model carefully. There are more than 70 different types – opt for a belt that will provide you with the support that you need for the specific tasks you perform.

Regardless of the type you choose, keep the following in mind when wearing a back belt:

- ❖ In order to maintain muscle strength in your back, loosen your back belt when you're not lifting. If you don't, the back belt can actually cause your muscles to weaken.
- ❖ Good body mechanics are not replaced by wearing a back belt; you must still use proper lifting techniques.

Carrying Heavy Loads

Carrying heavy loads can present ergonomic hazards which can lead to injuries. Remember these safety tips when lifting heavy loads on the job:

- Look ahead to make certain your intended path is clear.
- Avoid stairs, if possible. If you must take the stairs, use the banister or wall to help you maintain balance.
- Have someone else open doors, gates and other closed entries for you.
- Change direction by moving your feet, not your hips.
- Keep your shoulders, hips and feet pointed in the same direction.
- Never twist at your waist while carrying a load.
- Set the load down if it becomes too heavy or unstable.



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