

LIFTING DO'S & DON'TS

DO

- Know or test the object weight.
- Use ergonomic lift assists when possible.
- Plan the lift and clear your path.
- Get help for heavy or awkward loads.
- Keep the object in the power zone.
- Use a wide stance for balance.
- Use your legs to lift.
- Pivot your feet to avoid twisting.

DON'T

- Don't hold your breath.
- Don't bend or twist at the waist.
- Don't use a partial grip (1-2 fingers).
- Don't obstruct your vision when carrying.
- Don't jerk or lift quickly.
- Don't pinch your fingers or toes.
- Don't pull a load if you can push it.
- Don't forget proper PPE.

When carrying an object, keep it as close to your body as possible. The further away it is, the more force it puts on your back!



Ergonomics

Not Just For Office Chairs!

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates that over 1 million workers experience low back pain. Back related injuries account for 25% of all workers comp claims. Americans spend, on average, \$100 million a year on medical bills, medications, and treatments for low back pain. And, according to the BLS, more than 75% of back injuries are directly related to poor or improper lifting techniques.

Preventing back injuries and recurring back pain is as simple as planning ahead and knowing your personal limitations. Follow these steps to stay injury and pain free!

1. Know the weight of objects you are picking up. If it looks heavy, assume it is heavy. OSHA says that objects weighing over 50 pounds require assistance via a lifting device or another person.
2. Know your limitations. Do you have a bad back? How are your knees? Any history of injuries that you should take into account?
3. Warm-up! Believe it or not, performing some basic stretches and moving your body through its normal range of motion primes your nervous system for lifting heavy objects.
4. Use proper lifting techniques.
5. Ensure that your path is clear before walking with an object.
6. Never twist at the ankles, knees, or hips, or rotate your trunk while carrying an object.

Basic Stretches & Movement Warm-Ups –

Calves/Hamstrings - Position your body with one leg forward and the toes of that foot raised up. Keep your back straight while you bend forward at the waist. You should feel a stretch in the back of your thigh and knee. Then shift your weight onto your forward leg and bend your knee, keeping the back leg straight and heel on the floor. Hold each stretch for 20 seconds. Perform each stretch 2 times for each leg. (Pic. 1)

Lower Back - Stand with hands on hips. Stabilizing the hips and legs, gently roll your upper body forward, right, backward, and left to stretch your lower back. Perform 5 slow circles gradually expanding the circle each time. Repeat in the opposite direction. (Pic. 2)

Proper lifting technique –

Always keep your back straight. However, this does not necessarily mean perpendicular to the ground. It's okay for your chest to point at the ground, as long as you avoid rounding the back. Always think about driving your heels through the ground, or pushing the ground away when you lift. NEVER pull the object off the ground.

