

Safe Lifting Tips

Back injuries are one of the most common types of soft tissue injuries and one of the most painful. It can happen when lifting a heavy load or bending down to pick up a pen.

Here's why: On average, our upper bodies weigh about 100 lbs. If you're not using proper lifting techniques, your spine must support your upper body as well as the load. This puts an additional 1,000 lbs. of pressure on your back.

This *Safety Talk* provides helpful tips on how to protect your back when handling loads.



BEFORE THE LIFT

- **Load weight** - Try to assess how heavy the load is before you lift. If you think the load is too heavy, ask for help.
- **Mechanical Aids** - If you're transporting the load a long distance or if it is too heavy, use a cart, dolly, or other lifting aids.
- **Plan ahead** - Determine the best path of travel. Check for obstacles. Know how to best lift the object, especially with awkward loads.

This *Safety Talk* provides awareness level training on safe lifting. If this information is unclear or if you have any additional questions, please talk to your supervisor.

DURING THE LIFT



- Stand close to the load.
- Position your feet shoulder width apart.
- Bend at your knees, not at your waist.
- Keep your head and chin up as you lift. This will help keep your back straight.
- Tighten stomach muscles to support the lower back.
- Grip the object firmly and keep arms close to your body.
- Lift with your legs, they are the strongest muscles.
- Keep the load close to your body.

STAY IN YOUR POWER ZONE

Mid-chest to mid-thigh

- Avoid twisting while carrying objects. Pivot your feet if you need to change directions.
- Always push, don't pull carts/hand trucks, etc. Less force is placed on your lower back.

