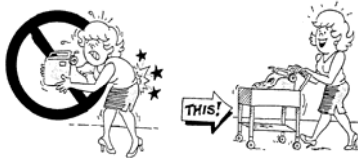


Use Your Legs and Knees, NOT Your Back

Most of us have experienced back pain at one time or another. Backs account for over 20% of all work-related injuries, for numerous reasons, but many, if not most, back injuries are the result of improper lifting.

If we didn't stand and walk on two legs we would have fewer back problems, and definitely fewer lifting-caused back problems. Obviously, we stand and walk on two legs, and standing erect is the beginning of our back problem. Standing throws most of the strain of weight-carrying on the lower back, which is the area of most back problems. Lifting and carrying heavy weight places excessive burdens on the spine, and can result in back strains. Twisting while lifting or carrying is even worse for your back.



There are many ways to avoid back strains, but one of the best is to NEVER LIFT MORE THAN IS COMFORTABLE. If you are not comfortable with the load, get help. Lift slowly; if you can't, the load is too heavy. Get help from a co-worker, or use mechanical assistance.

Regardless of the weight to be lifted, LIFT PROPERLY! There are many complicated procedures for lifting safely, but if you remember this one simple phrase you'll be well on the way to protecting your back from the ravages of improper lifting. The phrase is,

"Use Your Legs and Knees, NOT Your Back!"

When lifting, utilize the following techniques:

- When lifting at shoulder level avoid extending your arms out and pulling objects to you; maneuver your body as close to the object as possible. Grasp the object firmly and hold it close to your body, then lift.
- When lifting at floor level, use your legs and knees like an evaluator; avoid bending over like a crane. Maneuver your body as close to the object as possible, crouch down and grasp the object firmly holding it close to your body, then lift with your legs.
- When carrying objects, use your body's center of gravity. Grasp the object firmly holding it close to your body; keep your back straight and your elbows tucked in. Make sure you can see where you are going.
- When placing objects down, never twist your body; always step towards where you will be placing the object. If placing an object down at floor level, once again use your legs and knees like an evaluator; do not bend over like a crane.



When utilizing these simple lifting techniques, you'll find yourself lifting more safely and easily.

When we share the responsibility for safety in the workplace, everyone wins!!