



BACK SAFETY – LIFTING TECHNIQUES

TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – INJURY PREVENTION

March 2025

Back Safety Training – Lifting Techniques

<https://youtu.be/k1n5ECgByxY?si=CjDEJ-6xEbGRu-n9>

Introduction:

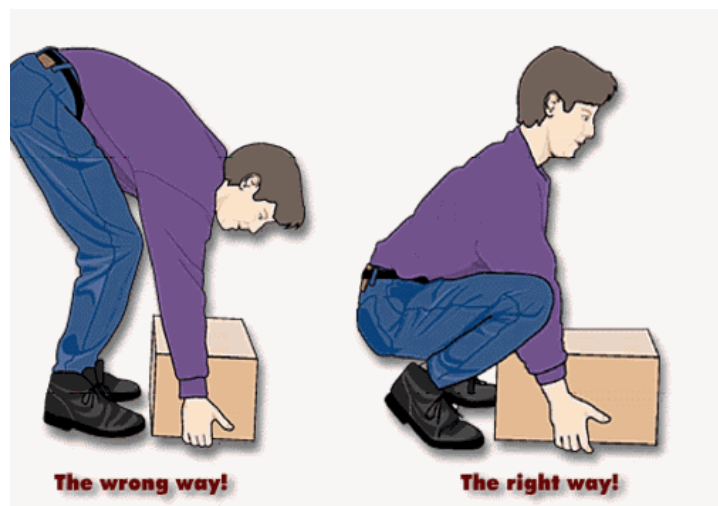
Back injuries are some of the most common and debilitating injuries in the workplace. Lifting improperly can lead to strains, sprains, and long-term back problems that can significantly impact your ability to work. This toolbox talk will cover essential techniques and safety tips for lifting and protecting your back.

Key Hazards:

1. Improper Lifting
2. Twisting while Lifting
3. Lifting Too Heavy or Awkward Loads
4. Lifting Without Assistance

Proper Lifting Techniques:

1. Plan the Lift:
 - Before you lift, assess the load. Make sure you know what you're lifting, how heavy it is, and if you need assistance.
 - Clear the area of obstacles to ensure you can move freely during the lift.
 - If the object is too heavy or awkward, ask for help





or use mechanical aids like dollies or forklifts.

2. Position Your Feet:

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart to provide a stable base of support.
- Position yourself close to the object you're lifting. Don't reach for it; get as close as possible to avoid straining your back.

3. Bend Your Knees, Not Your Back:

- Squat down by bending your knees, not your back.
- Keep your back straight and your chest out. Avoid bending at the waist or rounding your back.
- This helps to keep the strain off your lower back and places the load on your leg muscles, which are much stronger.

4. Use Your Legs:

- When lifting, use the strength of your legs, not your back. Push through your heels, not your toes, as you lift.
- Keep the object as close to your body as possible to reduce stress on your spine.

5. Keep the Load Close:

- Hold the load close to your body, at the level of your waist.
- The further the load is from your body, the more strain it places on your back.

6. Avoid Twisting:

- Never twist your body while lifting or carrying a load. Twisting places immense pressure on your spine, which can cause injury.
- If you need to change direction, pivot with your feet, not your back. Keep your body facing forward at all times.



7. Lower the Load Safely:

- To lower an object, bend your knees and squat down, just like when lifting. Do not bend at the waist.
- Keep your back straight and control the load as you lower it.

Additional Safety Tips:

- **Lift in Pairs When Necessary:** If an object is too large or heavy to lift alone, don't hesitate to ask for help. Always communicate clearly with your lifting partner to ensure coordination.
- **Use Mechanical Aids:** When possible, use equipment like forklifts, carts, or hoists to assist in lifting heavy or awkward items. This reduces the risk of back strain and injury.



- **Take Breaks:** If you're doing repetitive lifting or heavy lifting throughout the day, take regular breaks to rest your back. Stretching during these breaks can also help prevent stiffness and injuries.
 - **Warm Up:** Just like before any physical activity, warm up your muscles before engaging in heavy lifting. Stretch your back, legs, and arms to prepare your body for the task ahead.
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Conclusion:

Back injuries can take a long time to heal and can impact your ability to work. By following proper lifting techniques and being mindful of the loads you handle, you can protect your back and reduce the risk of injury. Always think safety first and use the right techniques when lifting to ensure you stay healthy and avoid unnecessary injuries.

