

SAFETY AWARENESS

Brief Topic Safety Refresher Training For Associates

2024

Manual Material Handling

For construction workers and contractors, repetitive motions, poor lifting and unsafe handling injuries are some of the most common. Coincidentally, they are also usually preventable by practicing safe lifting techniques. Use these helpful ergonomic guidelines to lift any size load without causing injury to yourself or others.

Safe Lifting Basics

Safe lifting plays an important role in keeping your back healthy and you safe. There are safe lifting techniques that take strain off the lower back area:

- Look over the load. Decide if you can handle it alone or if you need assistance. When in doubt, ask for help. Moving an object that is too heavy or bulky can cause severe injury.
- Clear away any potential obstacles before beginning to carry the object.
- Support and propel the object while carrying it; your grip should be firm. Carrying objects will change your balance. To keep this change of balance to a minimum, keep the load close to your body and to your normal center of gravity, between the legs and shoulders.
- Use good foot positioning. Your feet should be shoulder width apart, with one foot beside and the other foot behind the object that you are going to lift. This allows you to use the full power of your leg muscles. Leg muscles are stronger and more powerful than back muscles, so let your legs do the work.
- Bend your knees. Bending over at the waist to reach for the object you want to lift puts strain on your back, shoulder and neck muscles.
- Keep your arms and elbows as close to your body as you can while lifting. If you have to stretch your arms out completely away from your body, ask for assistance with the lift.
- Use your feet to change direction. Don't twist your body. Twisting adds to the stress of the lift and affects your balance.
- To lower the object, bend your knees as you did to pick it up. To place the load on a cart or other elevated surface, set it on the edge and slide it into position. Make sure your hands and feet are clear when lowering the load.
- Safe lifting of heavy objects requires training and practice. And when equipment is available, it should be used to lift and carry heavy objects. Loaders, forklifts and hoists are designed for this purpose.

