

Program Management Office Safety Bulletin for October 2019

Do You Know How to Lift and Carry Safely?

Lifting and carrying are power jobs that require special care and training to prevent back injuries.

Back injuries accounted for 177,580 of the total 905,690 injuries in the private sector in 2012, [according to Injury Facts 2015](#). Back injuries can be difficult to treat and may result in lengthy and expensive rehabilitation.

Whether lifting at home or at work, make an effort to take special care of your back. The National Safety Council has a number of suggestions to prevent lift-and-carry injuries and keep your back strong and healthy.

Power Warm-ups

You will work better if you start each day with slow stretches. These warm-ups let you ease comfortably into your workday and help you avoid injury.

Leg and Back Warm-up

- Prop one foot on a chair or a stool for support
- Take a deep breath and ease forward slowly, keep you back slightly curved
- Blow out slowly as you ease forward, counting to seven
- Repeat seven times
- Switch feet and repeat

Backbend

- Stand with your feet about 12 inches apart
- Support the small of your back with your hands
- Hold your stomach in firmly and take a deep breath
- Arch backward – bend your head and neck as you go, blowing air slowly out for seven counts
- Repeat seven times



Power Lifting Tips

- Protect your hands and feet by wearing safety gear
- Size up the load and tip it on its side to see if you can carry it comfortably
- Get help if the load is too big or bulky for one person
- Check for nails, splinters, rough strapping and sharp edges
- Make sure your footing is solid and keep your back straight with no curving or slouching
- Center your body over your feet, get a good grip on the object and pull it close to you
- Pull your stomach in firmly and lift with your legs, not your back
- If you need to turn, move your feet, do not twist your back

Oversized or Tough Lifting Jobs

- Do not try to carry a big load alone; ask for help
- Work as a team by lifting, walking and lowering the load together
- Let one person call the shots and direct the lift
- Use proper mechanical devices for heavy loads
- Use a step stool or sturdy ladder to reach loads above your shoulders, get as close to the load as you can and slide it toward you
- Do all the work with your arms and legs, not your back
- For loads under racks and cabinets, pull the load toward you, try to support it on one knee before lifting, then use your legs to power the lift

Always use your stomach as a low-back support by pulling it in during lifting. Remember, a strong, healthy back helps you enjoy life. Avoid injuries by making it a full-time job to take care of your back.

For more information on the [ergonomics of lifting](#), visit the Occupational Safety & Health Administration website.