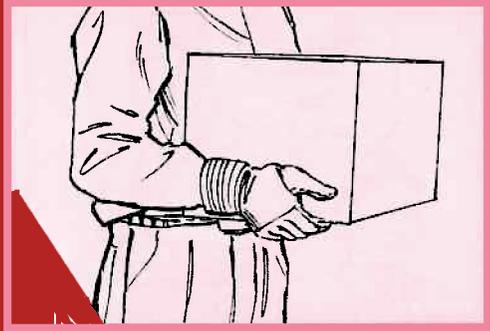


Employees' Guide to Manual Handling



What is manual handling?

It is lifting and moving things by using your hands or bodily force. This guidance aims to support you in reducing the risk of accident and injuries in moving and handling such strains, sprains, hernias etc.



Strains and Sprains

Muscles and joints can be injured if you do too much.

Fractures

Dropping a heavy load can break bones.

Wounds

Handling sharp rough surfaces can cut and bruise your skin.

Hernias

The strain of lifting can cause painful ruptures in your stomach muscles.

Prevent pain, injury and damage.

Follow these basic tips to prevent accidents.

Think before you begin.

Check this guide for the safest way to lift.



How heavy might the load be?

Decide whether you can lift the load safely.

Check the packaging for information about the weight and whether the load is equally balanced. If the load has no information about its contents on it, test the weight before attempting to lift it.

Examine the object

Look for any sharp edges. Consider whether the object can be moved safely if it is divided into smaller loads.

Plan the job.

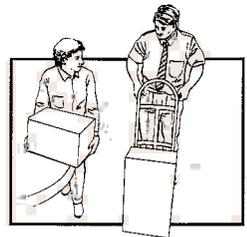
Check the route you plan to take for obstacles, steps or hazards.

Find out where the object will be unloaded and, if necessary, plan 'rest stops' along the way and between loads.



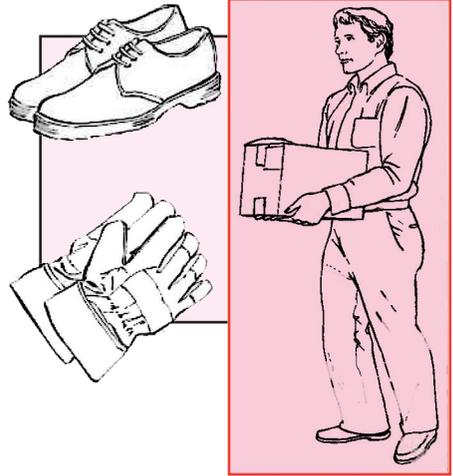
Get a good grip.

Decide beforehand how to hold the object. Protect your hands and feet by gripping the load firmly. If you wear gloves to prevent cuts or burns, make sure they fit properly and don't slip.



Wear suitable clothing.

- Your clothes should allow you to move freely but not be so loose that they could snag or get in the way.
- You should wear enclosed footwear at all times and gloves to protect your hands.



Rest, or rotate tasks.

Avoid becoming overtired. Frequent lifting, lowering and moving is demanding work, and can cause stress to the muscles and joints. Take short rests regularly, and do other tasks between moving items if you can.

Take extra care.

You should make the load lighter, for example, by dividing it into smaller loads, if:

- it is too heavy or too big
- it goes below your knees or above your shoulders, or
- you have to straighten your arms to carry it.

Otherwise it might block your view or put more pressure on your back.

While carrying the load avoid twisting your back or leaning sideways if possible. Move your feet instead.



Keep hands in the clear!

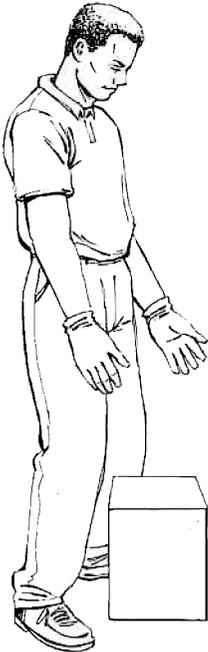
Be careful not to crush your fingers when you are putting things down.

Lifting the right way

Lift things the right way to reduce the risk of injuring your back, arms and legs.

The one-person lift ('squat lift')

1. Think before you do anything. Examine the box or load first. Make sure it's not damaged and won't split or break when you carry it.
2. Stand as close to the load as possible.
3. Stand in a stable position with your feet apart and one foot slightly forward. Make sure you can move easily and can keep your balance during the move.
4. Bend your knees, but don't bend them fully as you won't have a lot of power to lift.
5. Only bend your back slightly. Don't stoop.
6. Grip the load firmly, keeping it as close to your waist as possible. If the weight of the load is uneven, keep the heaviest part next to your body.
7. Begin the move by using your leg muscles to straighten your legs. Don't bend your back any further while you are lifting.



Only lift as much as you can easily manage.

8. Move smoothly.
9. Don't twist or lean sideways. Keep your body squarely over your hips and move with your feet.
10. Keep your head up and look ahead.
11. Keep the load as close to you waist as possible when you carry it.



Alternative lift

If it is difficult to bend your knees or get close to the object, follow these guidelines.

1. Plan the move before you begin.
2. Stand as close to the object as you can.
3. Bend your knees, if possible, or put your knees against a solid object. Use an arm as a support if this helps.
4. Bend at the hips, keeping your head and back in a straight line.
5. Get a good grip.
6. Lift gradually, using your legs, buttocks and stomach muscles.

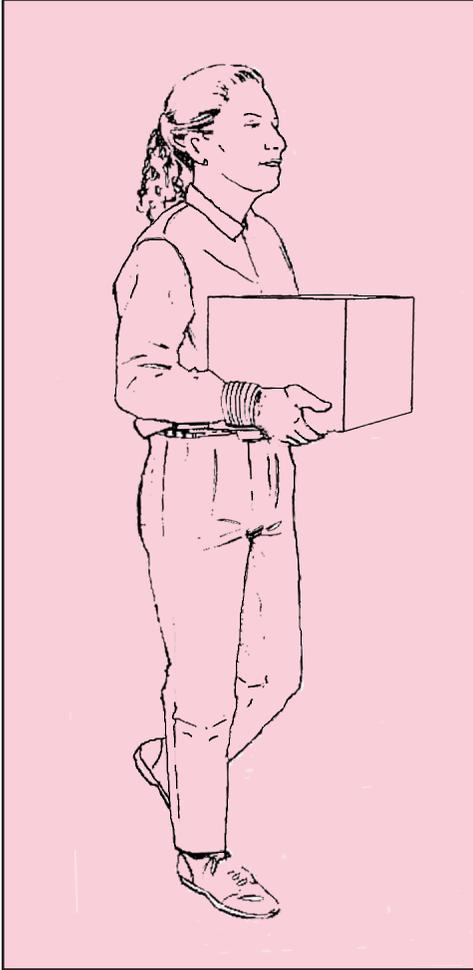


More tips on lifting

- Make sure you have enough space to work in.
- Slide the load closer to you if it's on a shelf.

Carrying

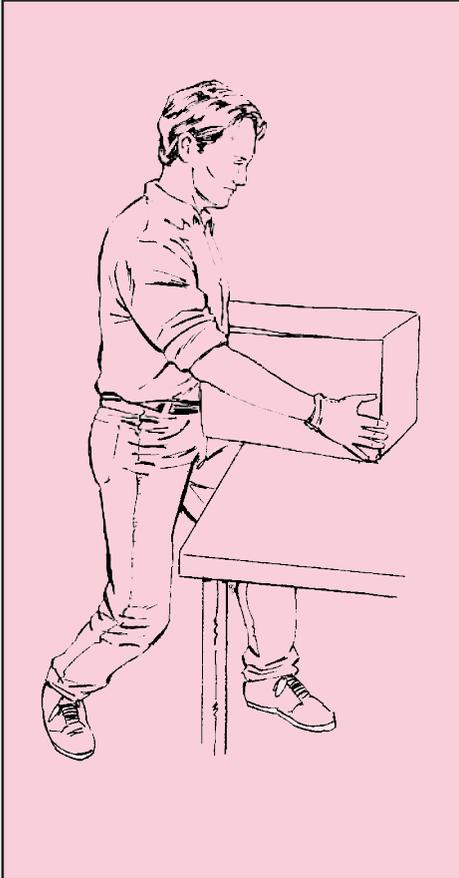
You can help prevent injuries when carrying objects too. Here's how.



- **Don't block your vision**
by carrying something that is too big. Use a mechanical aid or get help if you need it.
- **Keep your arms tucked in**
to prevent your neck and shoulder muscles from getting tired or injured.
- **Keep the load close**
to your body.
- **Don't twist your body,**
stoop, bend or lean back. If you must change directions, move your feet instead.
- **Don't change your grip**
on the load unless its weight is supported.
- **Face the spot**
where the load will rest by turning your feet and whole body in that direction.

Unloading

Be as careful setting down the load as you were when lifting it.



- **Bend your knees**
to lower the load. Don't stoop. Keep the load close to your body.
- **Be careful with your fingers**
and toes. Make sure there is enough room for them when you put the load down,
- **Put the load**
on a bench or table by resting it on the edge and pushing it forward with your arms and body.
- **Slide the load**
If it needs to go into a tight space – its much easier and safer than trying to lift it.
- **Make sure the load is secure**
wherever you place it. Make sure it won't fall, tip over, roll or block someone's way.

More tips for carrying and unloading things

- Don't overdo it. For example, take two small loads instead of one big one, Get help for large objects or use a trolley.
- Stack material carefully as you unload. Don't stack things too high or try to balance material that might fall.

Special lifts

You may have to use different types of lift for some objects. Remember to always plan the task before you begin.

One-hand lifting

If you need to lift using only one hand, for example when lifting a bucket, take extra care.

- Divide the load if you can.
- Brace your body with the opposite arm, if possible. This will help steady and support your body.
- Reach for the load. Bend your knees, and keep your back straight.
- Grip the load firmly (use a handle if possible).
- Lift with your legs, using your free arm for balance.
- Keep your shoulders level. Switch hands regularly.



Awkward objects

Some objects may be an unusual or difficult shape and size.

- Stand over one corner of the load, with your feet comfortably apart.
- Grasp the bottom inside and the outside top corners.
- If the weight is unbalanced, lift and carry the object with its heaviest side close to your body.
- Bend your knees and lift, keeping the same grip.



Lifting to a high place

Try not to lift anything above your shoulders as it may put strain on your body.

- Lighten the load if you can by dividing it into smaller loads.
- Stand on something sturdy (not a chair) with one foot in front of the other, unless you are using a stepladder.

Lowering from a high place

Take extra care when you are lowering objects from above your head.

- Test the load's weight by pushing up on it. Check to see if the weight of the load will shift when you lift it.
- Check to make sure there isn't anything on top of the load that could fall off when you lift it.
- Stand as close to the load as possible.
- Grip the object firmly, sliding it down your body.
- Use a mechanical aid or get help if necessary.