Proper Lifting and Carrying

Lifting is an activity that can cause strain or injury if not done with the proper techniques. Back strains are the most common work related injury cited by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Each year nearly one million workers suffer back injuries. Three out of four of those injuries occur while lifting.

Preventing Back Injury

Techniques can be followed to prevent potential strain of the back muscles. The main points to follow when lifting are: using legs to lift load, keep back aligned when lifting, keep loads close to body, reduce size of material, and use assistance when needed.

Storage

Storing objects in easier to reach areas can also prevent back strain. Put boxes and objects at hip height and easy to reach areas. Don’t put heavy loads very high or very low. Keep weight of boxes even and break up heavy loads to minimize strain.
<table>
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| PLANNING    | • Before moving the item take time to look over the load's weight, shape, and position  
              • Do not move a load that is too large, instead ask for assistance from a co-worker  
              • Use a mechanical aid such as a wheelbarrow, cart, dolly or hoist when no help is present  
              • Move obstacles out of way before carrying loads |
| LIFTING     | • Squat! Don’t bend at the waist to lift objects. Leg muscles are much stronger than back muscles  
              • Put on food beside and one foot behind object shoulder width apart.  
              • Use help if object is too heavy or too long |
| CARRYING    | • Keep load close to your body for supported balance  
              • Keep arms and elbows as close as your body as you can  
              • Use your feet and legs to change direction. Twisting the torso can cause strain and cause loss of balance. |
| LOWERING    | • Bend knees as you did when you lifted the object.  
              • Put edge of object on surface then slide into place  
              • Don’t overreach or stretch away from body |
Plan your lift. Ask for help. Widen your base of support. Bend your knees.

Tighten your stomach muscles. Lift with your leg muscles. Keep your load close. Keep your back straight.