

Back Safety

Expert Advice from Cove Risk Safety Services



Safety
Awareness
For
Everyone

Proper Lifting Prevents Back Injuries

Americans suffer many work-related injuries involving the back, annually. There are many causes of back injuries and several factors that can affect the severity of the injury.

Back injuries can occur as a result of poor body mechanics and overexertion. The body mechanics you choose are important when lifting, reaching, pushing, pulling, twisting, and more. Proper body mechanics will decrease your chances of injury for each of these. And, conversely, poor body mechanics will increase the likelihood of injury.

Here are some things to consider when doing tasks that involve body mechanics:

- Maintain a neutral spine (don't hunch or bend)
- Bend your knees
- Use legs (legs are stronger than your back)
- No twisting
- Avoid long distances (use a cart or dolly if you need to go long distances)
- Keep objects close to you (position yourself close to the object or move the object close to you before lifting)
- Clear environment (what your holding may block your view of your path)
- Take it slow and use secure movements (avoid jerky movements)
- Get help (don't be a hero and overexert yourself)
- Push rather than pull
- Change stressful positions often
- If you are sitting for too long- stand
- If you are standing for too long- stop and squat

How to lift properly:

- Stand with feet apart one foot slightly ahead of the other (this helps with balance)
- Squat down keeping back straight, keep chin tucked, and lift smoothly
- Keep object close to you
- Bend your knees and hips using legs to lift
- Maintain lumbar curve
- Do not twist or bend sideways
- Face the object you are picking up
- If changing direction, do not twist, pivot with your feet

How to lift something from above shoulder level:

- Raise your body (use a stepstool or ladder to get closer to the object)
- Lower the item to a different level or hand it to someone else
- Support the item with a firm grip
- Follow the steps listed above, starting with keeping the object close to you

[Download](#) a Safe Lifting Techniques Poster

Additional safety related information can be found on the [Cove Risk Services](#) website. These FREE resources are provided to members only as part of the Safety Awareness for Everyone (S.A.F.E) program.