

Safety First!

SAFELIFT
Preventing Back Injuries

Primary Causes

Primary Causes of Back Injuries

- Improper lifting techniques
- Overexertion
- Poor posture
- Slips and falls
- Twisting when lifting
- Other factors
 - Medical
 - Lack of exercise

Symptoms

Symptoms of Back Injuries

- Pain and tightness
- Spasms
- Decreased range of motion
- Numbness of the legs
- Limited ability to sit or stand

The Opportunity

The Opportunity

- About 70% of injuries to Medical Practitioners are back injuries

SAFELIFT

**8 Steps to a
SAFELIFT**

SAFELIFT

- 1) **S**ize up the load
- 2) **A**ssess and plan the job
- 3) **F**irm base of support
- 4) **E**asier with your knees bent
- 5) **L**oose grips lead to strains
- 6) **I**s the load close to your body?
- 7) **F**lex your legs to lift
- 8) **T**urn your body, don't twist

STEP 1 - Size up the load

- Evaluate the load before lifting. Don't try to lift a load that is too heavy or too large
- If load is too heavy, use a cart/rolling rack/hand truck, make more trips, or get help
- Make sure the load is stable and balanced
- Carry the load as close to your center of gravity as possible
- When possible, push instead of pulling an object. Pushing puts less strain on the back
- Lean into the object and let your body weight and leg muscles do the work.

SAFELIFT

Incorrect!



Correct!



STEP 2 – Assess and plan the job

- Choose the safest route to your destination; if possible, avoid stairs and other areas that provide poor footing
- If load must be carried a long distance, stop to rest if necessary
- Think through the lift, lift the load in your mind
- Face the object you are about to lift and if possible, face toward the direction you want to go

INCORRECT!



Stepping over mats and towels

Jump seat in the path of travel

CORRECT!



Clear path

STEP 3 – Firm base of support

- Make sure your footing is firm
- Keep feet at least shoulder width apart
- A staggered stance, with one foot slightly behind the other, often aids in providing a firm base of support.

Incorrect!



**Unbalanced
stance**

Correct!



**Staggered
stance**

SAFELIFT

STEP 4 – Easier with your knees bent

- When lifting bend at your knees, not your waist
- Bend down as far as necessary using your legs and not your back

Incorrect!

Bent back



Correct!

Back straight



Knees bent