

Injury Prevention Tips: Safe Materials Handling

Factors to Consider:

- Weight, size, shape of the object
- Required position of the body (bending, reaching, twisting)
- Frequency
- Personal limitations and safety equipment

Minimize the Physical Demand:

- Reduce the size/weight of the load
- Make the load easier to handle (use handles, straps, etc)
- Use proper storage techniques (heaviest items at knee to waist level)
- Reduce or eliminate carrying distances

Lifting Techniques

Remember To:

- Plan ahead
- Position the load properly before lifting
- Place feet a minimum of shoulder width apart for balance
- Bend at the hips and knees
- Tighten the abdominals & use the leg and buttock muscles
- Keep the spine neutral, do not round through the lower back
- Keep the load close to the body
- Lift smoothly, no jerking
- Pivot your feet: no twisting
- Coordinate lifting with two people

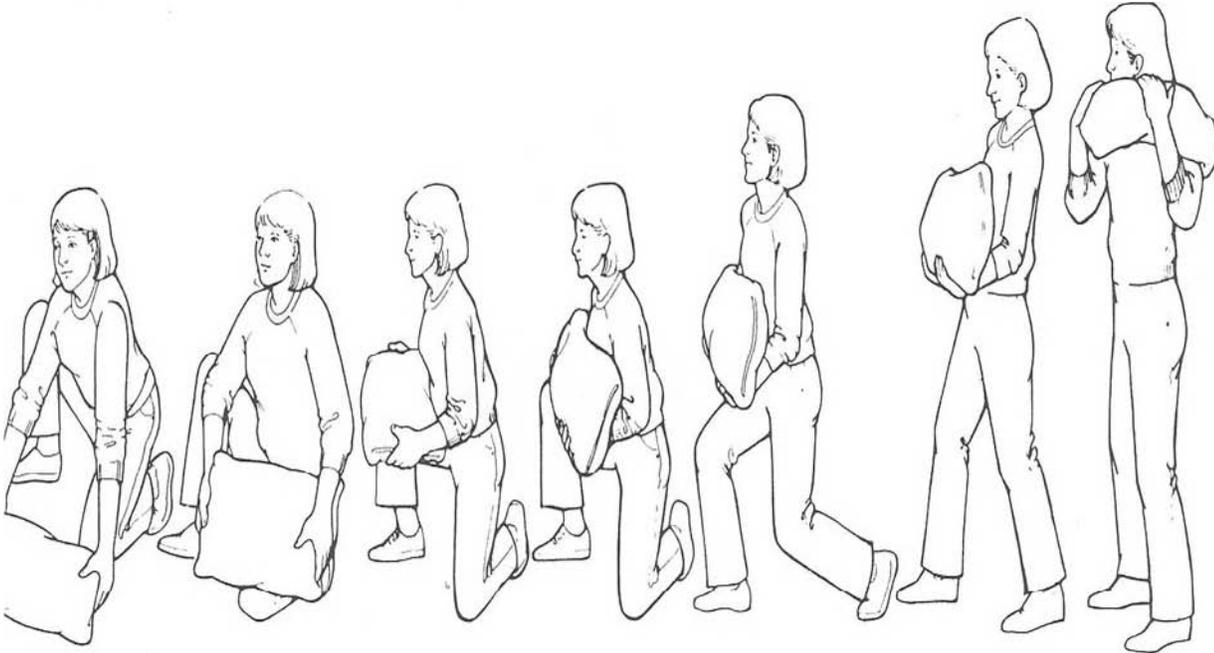
The Golfer's Lift

- ✓ Used to pick up small, light items 5lbs or less that are located on or near the floor
- ✓ Place one hand on a stable surface like a counter or furniture
- ✓ Reach for the item with the other hand and extend one leg (same side as the stabilized hand) behind you, lifting it off the floor slightly
- ✓ Keep one leg on the ground (same side as the reaching hand), bending the knee slightly



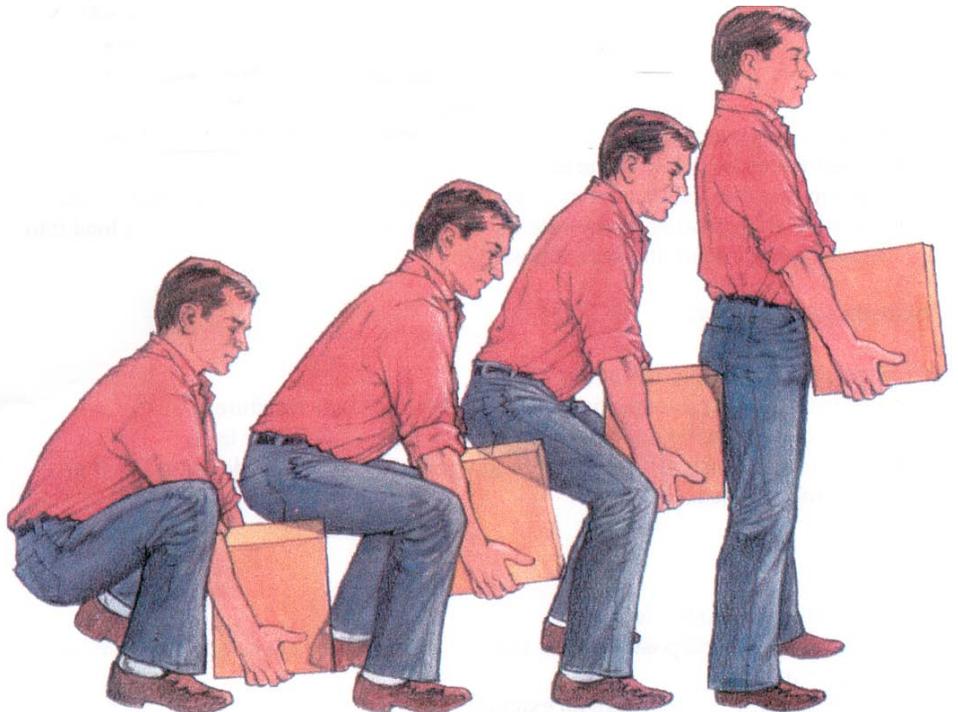
The Tripod or Three-Point Lift

- ✓ Used to pick up awkward, large items (e.g. bag of dog food) located on or near the floor
- ✓ Start in a ½ kneeling position with one knee on the floor directly in front of the object, and the other foot flat on the floor directly beside it
- ✓ Roll the object up onto the knee on the floor
- ✓ Roll and/or flip the object onto the opposite, bent knee
- ✓ Reposition object into a hug-hold, or onto the shoulder and stand using both legs



The Power Lift

- ✓ Used for very heavy, bulky items, located on below waist level
- ✓ Example: used by power weight lifters in competition
- ✓ Feet are side-by-side or staggered slightly, at shoulder width apart
- ✓ Squat to the item and remember to “stick your butt out”
- ✓ The entire spine does not have to remain rigid – but the curves of the spine should be maintained: do not round the lower back
- ✓ To stand: use the muscles in your buttocks and the back of the legs - not your back



Carrying Techniques

Remember To:

- Keep the object close to the centre of the body.
- When possible, break up a large load into smaller ones and make more trips.
- Avoid carrying on only one side for prolonged periods – distribute the load into both hands, and/or alternate if possible.

Pushing and Pulling Techniques

Remember To:

- Pushing is safer than pulling, especially for heavy objects (e.g.: furniture).
- Get your weight behind the object to maximize use of your legs.
- Maintain the natural curve in your lower back at all times; do not allow it to become rounded.



Reaching Techniques

Remember To:

- Use your feet and position your body as close to the item as possible to avoid over-reaching and twisting.
- Do not lift or carry with an extended arm.
- Use both arms, and alternate whenever possible for tasks that require repetitive reaching.