

Back Safety: *Safe Lifting Techniques*

Lifting can put great strain on your back. Lifting from the floor can be particularly risky. For example, lifting a 25-pound box from the floor requires about 700 pounds of back muscle force, even when you bend your knees. Below are some tips that can help protect your back when you need to lift heavy objects.

- Try out the load first. If it is too bulky or heavy, get help.
- Avoid lifts that require stretching or bending to reach the load. Redesign the work area so objects you lift are close to the body and at waist height.
- Don't lift awkward objects such as long pipes or large boxes by yourself. Get help or use mechanical assists.
- When lifting, keep your back straight and lift with your legs.
- Lift slowly and carefully and don't jerk the load around.
- Keep the load as close to your body as possible while lifting it.
- Don't twist or turn your spine while carrying the load.
- Make sure your path is clear while carrying the object. Remove obstacles that could cause you to trip.

A program to teach workers how to lift properly should be used in combination with workplace redesign that reduces the amount of lifting needed. Remember, if materials are too heavy or awkward to lift and carry safely, get help, redesign the materials to be lighter and easier to handle, or use mechanical assists such as hoists, carts, or conveyors.

