

## CONTROLLING RISKS FROM MANUAL HANDLING

As with any other risk, if you can eliminate or avoid the risks from manual handling, this is by far the best option. You should try to remove as many of the constraints as possible to reduce the risks to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

An ergonomic approach is recommended – look at how the task can be fitted to the individual.

Consider whether mechanical handling aids could be used, this could range from a simple trolley or sack truck to more sophisticated aids such as conveyors or fork lift trucks.

If you cannot eliminate or mechanise the manual handling tasks, you must carry out a risk assessment where the task could present a risk of injury. You need to look at ways to reduce the risks to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

## BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MANUAL HANDLING

There are some basic principles that everyone should observe prior to carrying out a manual handling operation:

- ensure that the object is light enough to lift, is stable and unlikely to shift or move
- heavy or awkward loads should be moved using a handling aid
- make sure the route is clear of obstructions
- make sure there is somewhere to put the load down wherever it is to be moved to
- stand as close to the load as possible, and spread your feet to shoulder width
- bend your knees and try and keep the back's natural, upright posture
- grasp the load firmly as close to the body as you can
- use the legs to lift the load in a smooth motion as this offers more leverage reducing the strain on your back
- carry the load close to the body with the elbows tucked into the body
- avoid twisting the body as much as possible by turning your feet to position yourself with the load.

### IMPROPER TECHNIQUE

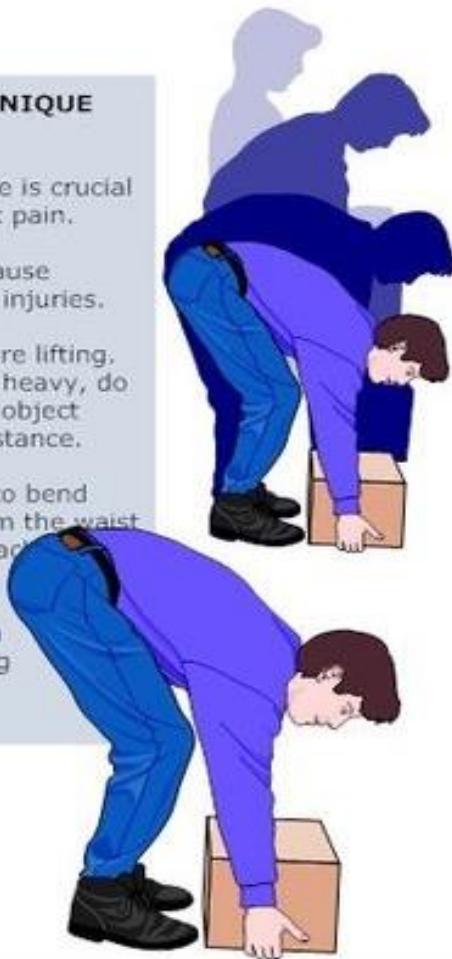
Proper lifting technique is crucial to avoiding lower back pain.

Improper lifting can cause muscle, disc and joint injuries.

Size up the load you are lifting. If it seems too large or heavy, do not attempt to lift the object yourself. Ask for assistance.

Don't stoop, which is to bend forward and down from the waist or the middle of the back.

Do not lead with the shoulders. This action may cause the twisting of the hips.



### PROPER TECHNIQUE

Let your lower body do most of the work when lifting heavy objects, for such technique will help prevent low back pain.

First, squat down in front of the object while keeping your back straight and chest forward.

Then tighten your abdominal muscles as you unbend your knees to lift straight up.

While lifting, take caution to keep the object you are lifting as close to your chest as possible.

Keep shoulders and hips aligned in the same direction.

