

Toolbox Talk

Safe Lifting Techniques

Safe lifting techniques should be stressed by all workplaces, but are commonly overlooked. Most people just want to finish the job quickly, even if that means moving heavy objects in unsafe ways.

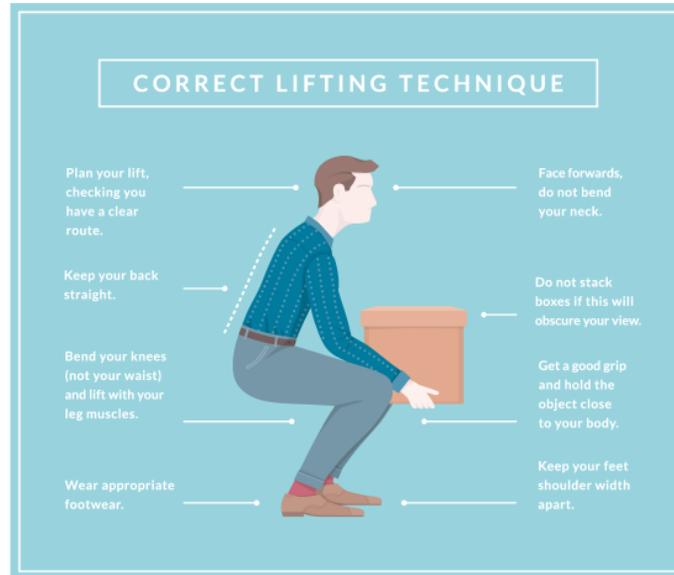
In doing so, workers can become injured and have to miss work for extended periods of time.

Safe lifting techniques should be incorporated for all workplaces because back and lifting injuries are a leading cause of missed work days. According to 2014 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, overexertion in lifting or lowering caused an average of 12 days away from work (30 percent more than the overall average), and was the fifth highest rate of days missed per 10,000 full-time workers.

Safe Lifting Techniques

Prevention and planning are perfect solution for most hazard abatement in the workplace. With proper safety training and the use of these safe lifting techniques, your team should be able to greatly reduce the risk of back and lifting injuries.

- Before lifting, assess what it is you are lifting and where it is going. Recognize how heavy the object is and determine if you can lift it by yourself. Never hesitate to ask for help if it is too heavy.
- Make sure to check the pathway you are taking to your final destination. There should not be any trip hazards or debris in your path.
- To safely lift the object, get as close to the object as possible. This will create more leverage for you and less strain on your muscles.
- Position your feet shoulder-width apart and angle one foot slightly forward for better balance.
- When you go to bend down, keep your back straight and use your legs and hips to lower yourself to the object. Never bend at the waist because this will cause immediate strain on your lower back.
- Use the hand of the leg that is angled forward and place it on the side of the object furthest from you.
- After you have a firm, comfortable grip, tighten your core and focus on keeping a straight back as you lift the object with your legs and hips. Looking forward will help keep your back straight and extend your legs. Always remember to keep the object close to your body.



Things to Avoid

Just as important as following safe lifting techniques, avoiding unsafe behavior can help you to avoid injury and to advise others on how to do the same.

Here are a few things to avoid while lifting:

- Never hold your breath while you lift an object. Exhaling out when lifting an object is the proper technique to use.
- When carrying an object, do not bend or twist at the waist. If you need to turn, slowly turn with your feet.
- Do not use a partial grip on an object. Always use two hands!
- Never obstruct your vision with an object you are carrying. Keep the object at mid-section level, from the mid-thigh to med-chest. This is your "power zone."
- Never forget to wear your PPE, such as gloves for grip or shoulder pads to cushion the load.

By practicing these safe lifting techniques, and avoiding bad lifting habits, you and your staff can stay healthy and on the job. Since lifting injuries are so common, and detrimental to productivity, the importance of safe lifting techniques cannot be understated and should be treated seriously in every industry.

From: <https://www.safetysign.com/help/h109/safe-lifting-tips>

REMEMBER TO NOMINATE YOUR SITE FOR THE SAFETY AWARD PROGRAM "SAFETY SITE OF THE MONTH"

Contact Jeff Barber or Dave Jakovina with your Safety Award nominations.