

# Do You Know How to Lift and Carry Safely?

Lifting and carrying are power jobs that require special care and training to prevent back injuries. Back injuries are a reality that almost all workers face to some degree, whether you work in construction or sit at a desk all day long. Even office workers may be called upon to lift a large or bulky object and run the risk of injury.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, over 1,000,000 workers suffer a back injury every year. Back injuries can be difficult to treat and may result in lengthy and expensive rehabilitation.

Whether lifting at home or at work, make an effort to take special care of your back. While it may seem impossible to completely prevent back injury, it doesn't have to be an inevitable fact of life. In addition to stretching and warming up it is important to also maintain good core strength and to stay hydrated. Below are a number of suggestions to prevent lift-and-carry injuries and keep your back strong and healthy.



## Power Warm-ups

You will work better if you start each day with slow stretches. These warm-ups let you ease comfortably into your workday and help you avoid injury. Stretches should be done a couple times a day if you work primarily at a desk or have prolonged periods of sitting throughout the day.

### Leg and Back Warm-up

- Prop one foot on a chair or a stool for support
- Take a deep breath and ease forward slowly, keep your back slightly curved
- Blow out slowly as you ease forward, counting to seven
- Repeat seven times
- Switch feet and repeat

### Backbend

- Stand with your feet about 12 inches apart
- Support the small of your back with your hands
- Hold your stomach in firmly and take a deep breath
- Arch backward – bend your head and neck as you go, blowing air slowly out for seven counts
- Repeat seven times

### Power Lifting Tips

- Protect your hands and feet by wearing safety gear
- Size up the load and tip it on its side to see if you can carry it comfortably
- Get help if the load is too big or bulky for one person
- Check for nails, splinters, rough strapping and sharp edges
- Make sure your footing is solid and keep your back straight with no curving or slouching
- Center your body over your feet, get a good grip on the object and pull it close to you
- Pull your stomach in firmly and lift with your legs, not your back
- If you need to turn, move your feet, do not twist your back

## **Oversized or Tough Lifting Jobs**

- Do not try to carry a big load alone; ask for help
- Work as a team by lifting, walking and lowering the load together
- Let one person call the shots and direct the lift
- Use proper mechanical devices for heavy loads
- Use a step stool or sturdy ladder to reach loads above your shoulders, get as close to the load as you can and slide it toward you
- Do all the work with your arms and legs, not your back
- For loads under racks and cabinets, pull the load toward you, try to support it on one knee before lifting, then use your legs to power the lift

Always use your stomach as a low-back support by pulling it in during lifting. Remember, a strong, healthy back helps you enjoy life. Avoid injuries by making it a full-time job to take care of your back.

Kent County and our Worker's Compensation Insurance Trust (DFIT administered by PMA companies) take workplace safety seriously. Immediately inform your supervisor and the Personnel Office and submit an incident reporting form whenever you suffer a workplace injury. Do not use your County Health Insurance (DVHT/Aetna) when seeking treatment for a work injury, inform the provider that it is a work related injury and ask them to contact the Personnel office at (302) 744-2310.

All incidents resulting from a workplace hazard or process are promptly investigated by the Kent County Safety Officer Brandon Olenik. If you observe a workplace hazard, please report it to the Safety Officer.

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