

Lifting

There is no single right way to lift. Objects are of different sizes, shapes, weights and these variations require people to think through the best method before a lift is attempted. In addition, people have different limitations that affect the method they choose. Some have bad knees or sore backs and everyone has different levels of strength. Despite these differences, there are lifting techniques that can increase or decrease the demands on the body.

The most important factor in creating a safe lift is to think about the lift for just a moment. In many instances, this moment of thought can make the difference between a safe or an unsafe lift.



Weight lifters lift incredible amounts of weight on a regular basis. They use their bodies in the strongest and most efficient manner possible. When they lift, they follow two basic principles:

- Keep the load close.
- Keep the natural curves.

The weightlifter keeps the weight within or close to his center of gravity and maintains the three natural curves of the spine throughout the lift.

Two additional principles in lifting that reduce the demands of that lift are:

- Build a bridge.
- Feet first.

Building a bridge means using an arm for support such as lifting something out of the trunk of a car. Placing one hand on the trunk ledge as you lift takes the load off of your lower back. Feet first simply means moving your feet to better position yourself for the lift.

Remember: There is no such thing as a light lift if the lift is performed incorrectly. If the upper body weight is held out in front of the center of gravity (as in lifting with the legs straight and the back bent forward), the back must lift whatever is picked up as well as the entire weight of the upper body. In most cases, the demands on the back will be determined more by the body position than by the weight of the object. Also, keep in mind that it is generally not one lift, but rather the hundreds of lifts that people perform both at work and at home that eventually lead to a back disorder. It is not possible to always lift perfectly, but it is important to make it less demanding. So, think before you lift.

LIFTING

Talking Notes

POINTS TO REVIEW

1. You don't get the job done any better by making your back work harder.

There is no single right way to lift. There is, however, a better and a worse way. Keep in mind that if you lift something in a more demanding way, you may, in fact, end up paying for it with a back injury.

2. When the situation allows, choose to lift as safely as you can.

Many situations will force you to lift in an awkward or demanding position. It is important to lift better when the choice is available to reduce the impact of lifting situations where you have no choice. The more good lifts you can do will help your body tolerate unavoidable bad lifts.

3. Just because the load is light does not mean it is a safe lift or that you won't get hurt.

The demand of a lift is determined more by your body position than by the weight of the load. If the body is not in a position to perform with the most strength and efficiency, the load will be more demanding.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are some of the more difficult lifts you have to perform? How can you perform them better?

2. How does body position affect the weight of an object?

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