

Campus Safety

Material Safety Data Sheet

Avoid Lifting Injuries by Using Basic Back Safety

Lift in power zone—avoid back injury.



Lifting or overexertion injuries are one of the leading causes of injuries on school campuses. Lifting accounts for approximately 20 to 30 percent of all worker injuries. The four most common causes of back injury are:

- Excessive bending (bending at the waist typically more than 45 degree angle).
- Twisting while carrying the load (in lieu of stepping with feet toward the path of travel).
- Reaching above your head when you pick up and set down the load.
- Overreaching while carrying or setting the load down too far away from the body.

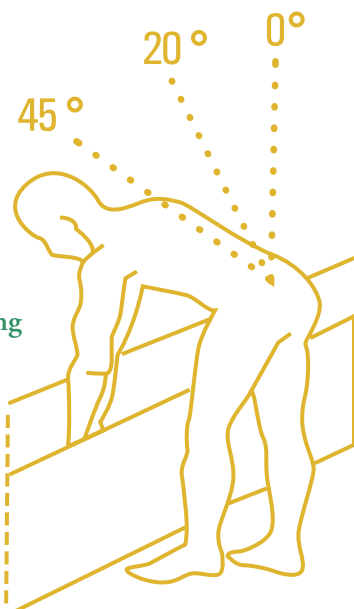
The first step to safe lifting is to size up the load. Will the load be too awkward for one person to lift? Is it likely to be too heavy? Should I get help? Do I need a two-wheel cart? How far do I need to carry the object?

After you have decided that you will be able to lift safely, remember the proper technique for lifting:

- Focus on the lift.
- Move close to the load.
- Be sure that your feet are shoulder-width apart. Squat down so you can use your leg muscles to lift the load.
- Pull the load close to the body and grasp object with all fingers.
- Maintain an "S" curve in your spine during the lift—don't bend over.
- Tighten the stomach, lift the head, and chin up (this keeps "S" curve in alignment).
- Raise up with your legs. Keep the load close to your body.

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Avoid excessive bending (more than 45°).



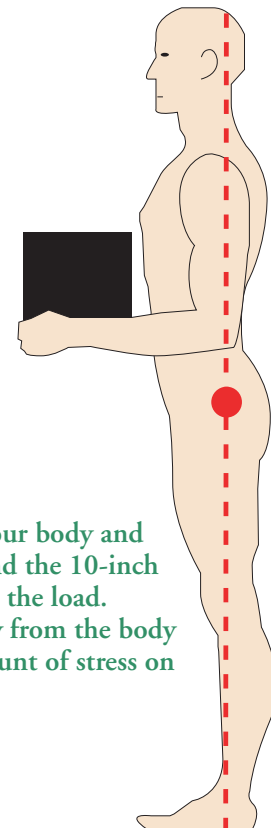
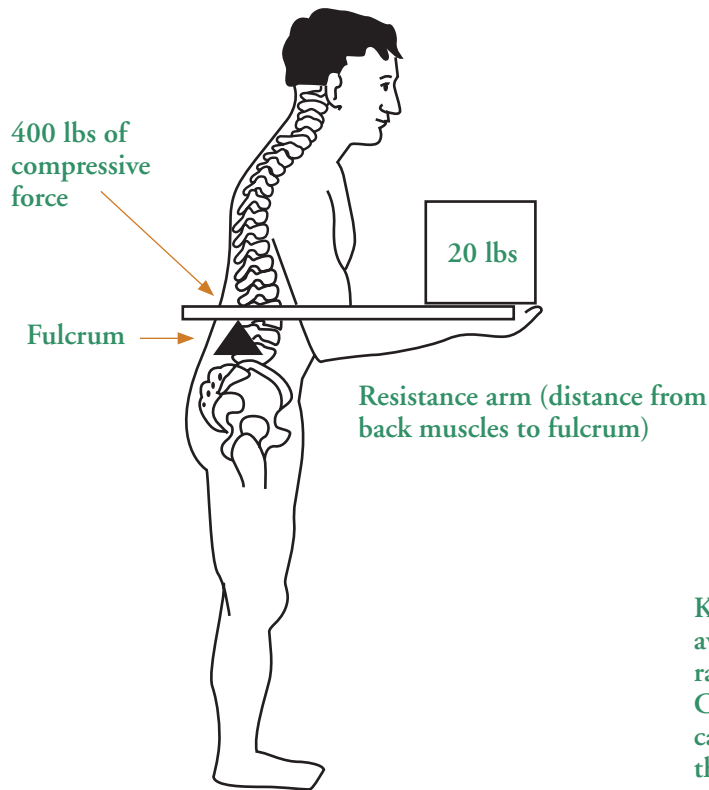
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In lifting injuries, nearly a third of all back injuries occur while carrying the load or while setting it down. When carrying and lowering loads, remember these few rules:

- Don't forget to maintain the "S" curvature of your spine while carrying and lowering the load.
- Do not twist at the waist with a heavy load. When you need to change direction, use your feet, so that you can keep the load in front of your body, where your arm and back muscles are the most efficient.
- Avoid leaning or bending over.
- Set the load down in one slow motion.
- Avoid lifting over your head. Lifting above the "Power Zone" places dangerous levels of stress on your lower back.
- Keep load close to your body and avoid reaching beyond the 10-inch range while lowering the load.



Don't forget to maintain the "S" curvature of your spine.



Keep load close to your body and avoid reaching beyond the 10-inch range while lowering the load. Carrying a load away from the body can increase the amount of stress on the lower back.

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