

Safety Blast – Back Safety

Save your Back

What is your back really meant to do?

Your back is made up of several parts, your spinal cord, bones, muscles, and nerve endings. The back supports your head and upper body. Backs are VERY fragile. That is something that we all need to understand and be constantly reminded of. A human back is not meant to lift with. That is fact. Your back supports your head and your upper body and that is it.

Key Elements – Pre-Lift Planning

1. Work Smart
 - Always warm up your back and legs before performing any lifting task, such as low back rotations and hamstring and Achilles stretches.
2. Before You Lift
 - Know what you are lifting and how you will lift it.
 - Be aware of the weight of the object.
 - Determine whether it is safe to lift on your own.
 - Make sure the work area is flat, dry, and clear of debris.
 - Make sure the lift pathway is clear.
3. Use Ergonomic Equipment
 - Use lift assists, forklift, dolly, cart, hand truck or hoist.
4. Make sure you are trained before using the equipment.
 - When lifting awkward or heavy loads, utilize a two-person lift.
 - Make sure you lift at the same time and keep the load level.
 - Wear Proper Protective shoes and gloves.



Steps for a Proper Lift



1. Have a wide base of support by keeping your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Maintain good posture: by looking straight ahead, keeping your back straight with a slight arch in the lower back, your chest out, and your shoulders back.
3. Bend your knees and squat down to reach it and keep it close to you as you straighten your legs up.
4. Use your stomach muscles.
5. Lift slowly by straightening your hips and knees, **not** your back.
6. Lead with your hips as you change directions while keeping your shoulders in line with your hips. Use your feet to change directions using small steps.
7. Set down your load slowly and carefully, again squatting with the knees and hips only.

Discussion Points:

1. Do you ask for help when you need it?
2. Do you practice safe lifting?
3. What is the heaviest thing you lift by hand?
4. Do you stretch before work or a lift?