

LIFTING AND CARRYING

Sometimes it's just not possible to change the way things are done, either by reorganising the workplace layout, or by introducing mechanical devices to lift items. In many cases manual lifting and carrying needs to be done. If that's the case, then here are a few simple rules to follow when lifting and carrying.

RULE 1: Plan the lift

If an object needs to be lifted and moved, know exactly where it needs to be taken before starting. Check the route is clear of obstructions. Ideally, muscles should be flexed and warmed up prior to the lift. If the object is too heavy or awkward, help should be sought. In a team lift, those involved should be of similar builds with a similar lifting capacity or strength. One of the team needs to be nominated to take charge and coordinate the lift.

RULE 2: Position feet correctly

Place one foot beside the load and the other slightly to the rear so it provides good balance and control.

RULE 3: Bend your knees

If the load is at ground level bend your knees, not your back, keep your back as straight and erect as possible.

RULE 4: Check out the load before you lift

Size it up, is it light enough for you to carry without straining? Is the weight of the load distributed evenly? Is the size right for you to get a good safe grip on it?

RULE 5: Get a good grip

Get a safe secure and comfortable grip on diagonally opposite corners of the object. Wherever possible grip with the whole hand rather than just the fingers.

RULE 6: Tighten stomach muscles and keep head erect

Tuck your chin in and lift by straightening your legs. There is an enormous risk of damaging the spine when lifting with a bent back. The most powerful lifting muscles in the body are in the thighs and buttocks. They should take the bulk of strain when lifting.

RULE 7: A smooth lift

Lift the load smoothly and slowly. Avoid any jerky movements.

RULE 8: Keep the load as close to the body as possible

The further away from your body that the load is, the greater the load put on the spine. If the load is weighted unevenly make sure the heaviest part is closest to the body. Twisting the body while lifting or carrying puts enormous strain on the spine.

RULE 9: Avoid twisting when lifting or carrying

If the direction needs to change mid-lift, point your body in the direction of movement.



Questions:

1. Should you attempt to lift a load which is heavy or awkward on your own?

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2. When planning a team lift what should we consider when assembling our team of lifters?

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3. Why is the location of the feet in relation to the object important?

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4. How should you hold your back when bending to lift?

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5. What are the most powerful lifting muscles in the body?

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6. What happens if you carry the load too far out from your body?

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