

# Proper Lifting Techniques- A How-to Guide



Lower back pain is the most costly problem in the health care industry and the second leading reason for missed workdays behind the common cold for Americans aged 20 to 50 years of age. Several factors contribute to an individual's risk of experiencing lower back pain such as aging, improper mechanics, smoking, obesity, osteoporosis, and poor physical shape. Proper lifting techniques are crucial to the health of nurses, movers, construction workers, and other individuals who lift heavy objects on the job. However, most people do not practice safe lifting techniques in their daily routines. The following is a guide for appropriate lifting mechanics that will help keep your back safe and healthy:

**1. Test the load.** Before you lift, check the weight and make sure you can lift it safely. If not, get help or use an assistive device such as a dolly.

**2. Keep your back in its natural curve.** Bend at the hips and knees. With the low back erect, the forces are distributed evenly and safely.

**3. Maintain a wide base of support.** A solid and wide base will help reduce the possibility of slipping.

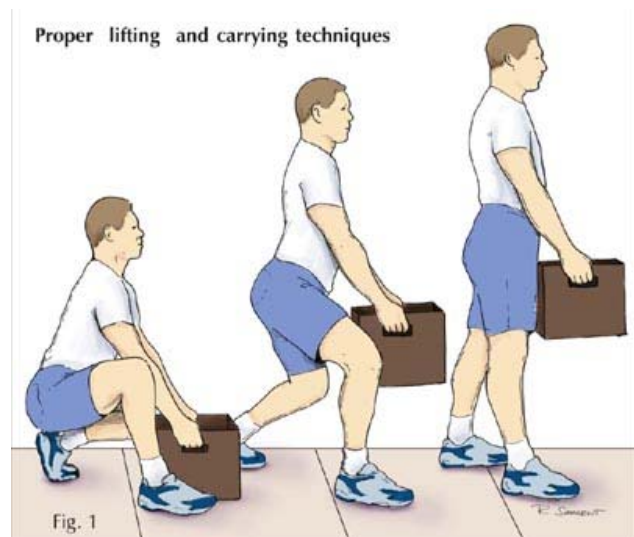
**4. Hold objects as close to you as possible.** This reduces stress on the back.

**5. Do not twist trunk when carrying.** Move or change directions with the feet. This decreases the stress and load on the back.

**6. Tighten stomach muscles when lifting.** This helps the abdominal area to assist in the lift and reduce strain on the low back.

**7. Think before you lift.** First think how you will lift the object. Plan the path and make sure it is clear for passage.

**8. Lift with the legs or the large muscles.** Using the large muscle groups helps to diminish the forces on the low back.



**The wrong way!**



**The right way!**

**9. Maintain good communication if two or more people are involved.** Good timing on a lift reduces the likelihood of jerky or sudden unexpected movements.

**10. Push rather than pull.** It is easier to utilize your weight advantage when pushing.

**11. Eliminate repetitive lifting duties if possible.** Place things or supplies that you constantly need or use at a better height initially to decrease lifting activities.