



SAFETY SHORTS

BACK INJURY PREVENTION



In spite of the increased use of machinery and equipment, lifting, moving and carrying are still requirements of many job tasks. Remember, back injuries and muscle strains are often the result of cumulative trauma from poor lifting techniques. That is why it is important to use safe lifting and materials handling techniques whenever possible.

Practice the following safe lifting techniques:

- ✓ Make sure you have a clear path to travel and space to set the object down before lifting it.
- ✓ Size up the load. If it's too heavy to lift, then get help or use a mechanical device.
- ✓ If you are starting your workday or have been at rest, do some simple stretching exercises before lifting.
- ✓ Use good balance. Place your feet approximately shoulder-width apart, one slightly in front.
- ✓ Bend at the knees while keeping your back relatively straight to grasp the load. Lift gradually by straightening the legs. Keep the load close to the body.
- ✓ Avoid twisting and lifting in the same motion. Lift, point feet in the desired direction, then deposit load.

Other Tips:

- ✓ Store heavy items on shelving between knee and shoulder height. This eliminates the need to change hand position. It also eliminates the most difficult parts of a lift - from the floor and overhead.
- ✓ When possible push the load, don't pull. Pushing allows use of the legs and is less stressful on the back.
- ✓ Don't store items on the floor in front of shelving. Do not over extend, avoid reaching over objects when lifting. Always keep the load close.
- ✓ Use machinery, equipment and tools whenever possible. **Remember: NO LIFT - NO INJURY!**