



## How to Lift and Carry Safely

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Lifting and carrying are power jobs – when you lift and carry the wrong way, you can damage your back. Back injuries are the most common type of injury in the workplace, resulting in approximately 236,000 cases involving days away from work in 2007. Over half of these injuries are from lifting.

Back injuries may be difficult to treat and may have lengthy and expensive rehabilitation times.

When you are lifting at home or at work, make an effort to take care of your back. The National Safety Council recommends a number of tips to prevent unintentional injuries and keep your back strong and healthy.

### Power warm-ups

You will work better if you start each day with slow stretches. These warm-ups let you ease comfortably into your workday and help you avoid injuries.

Leg and back warm-up	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Prop one foot on a chair or a stool for support</li><li>2. Take a deep breath</li><li>3. Ease forward slowly – keep your back slightly curved</li><li>4. Blow slowly outward as you ease forward to a seven count</li><li>5. Repeat seven times</li><li>6. Switch and do the same with the other foot</li></ol>
Backbend	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Stand with your feet about 12 inches apart</li><li>2. Support the small of your back with your hands</li><li>3. Hold your stomach in firmly and take a deep breath</li><li>4. Arch backward – bend your head and neck as you go, blowing air slowly out for seven counts</li><li>5. Repeat seven times</li></ol>
Power lifting tips	<p>Protect your hands and feet by wearing safety gear Size up the load – tip it on its side to see if you can carry it comfortably. Get help if the load is too big or bulky for one person. Check for nails, splinters, rough strapping and sharp edges.</p> <p>Lift it right – make sure your footing is solid. Keep your back straight, with no curving or slouching. Center your body over your feet, get a good grip on the object and pull it close to you. Pull your stomach in firmly. Lift with your legs, not your back; if you need to turn, move your feet and do not twist your back.</p>
Tough lifting jobs	<p><b>Oversized loads:</b> do not try to carry a big load alone; ask for help. Work as a team by lifting, walking and lowering the load together. Let one person call the shots and direct the lift. Use proper mechanical devices for heavy loads.</p>

**High loads:** use a step stool or a sturdy ladder to reach loads that are above your shoulders. Get as close to the load as you can and slide the load toward you. Do all the work with your arms and legs, not your back.

**Low loads:** loads that are under racks and cabinets need extra care. Pull the load toward you, and then try to support it on one knee before you lift. Use your legs to power the lift.

**Always** use your stomach as a low back support by pulling it in during lifting.

**Remember,** a strong, healthy, power back is vital to your job. It also helps you enjoy life. Take pains to avoid injuries by making it a full-time job to take care of your back!