

Safety Matters

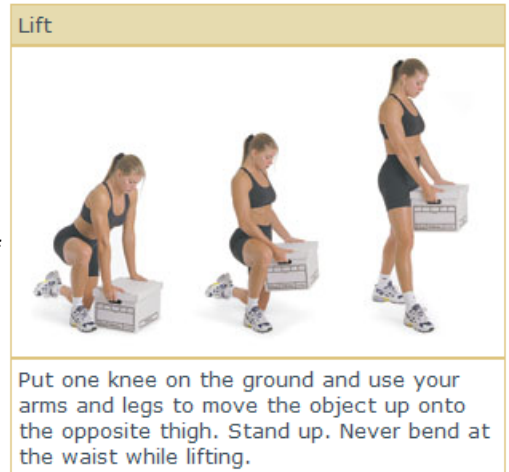
Proper Body Mechanics

Body Mechanics refers to the movement of our bodies, as we sit, stand, bend, lift, carry and sleep, every day. Most of the times the aches and pains that we feel in our bodies when we perform the simple tasks of standing, sitting, lifting, carrying, bending or sleeping, are not due to physical stress but more particularly due to the improper ways we hold ourselves.

Here are a few tips that will help you with your body mechanics and you can say goodbye to those aches and pains.

To protect your back while lifting you should:

- Be sure you have good footing. Your feet should be close to the object to be lifted and far enough apart for good balance (about shoulder width). Place one foot slightly ahead of the other. Your toes should be pointed slightly outward.
- When lifting a heavy object, shift the load or your body until you are in a position to make a straight lift. Never lift while in an awkward position.
- When making a lift from the floor, keep your arms as straight as practical, bend your knees, and then lift with the powerful muscles of your legs.
- Keep your back straight as possible; don't arch it.
- Remove greasy substances from hands before attempting to lift. Get a good handhold.
- Lift the object slowly, straightening your legs, keeping the load close to you as you come up. (Again, by keeping your spine straight, you force your leg muscles to do the lifting).
- If you have to change direction, do not twist your body. To turn, pivot your entire body.
- To set down the object, reverse the lifting procedure. With back straight, bend knees and go down to the crouching position.
- If it is necessary to lift from an elevation such as a bench, table or shelf, bring the object as close to your body as possible and keep your back straight as you lift with your legs.
- Ask for help when, because of excessive weight, bulk or awkward shape, one person cannot handle the load safely. Use material handling aids as much as possible (Anver Lifts, dollies, etc.).



To protect your back while standing you should:

- Relax your knees: do not lock them.
- Balance your weight evenly on both legs.
- When you are standing for long periods, place one foot a few inches higher than the other. Use a small stool, box or chair rung to do this. Alternate feet to reduce fatigue.
- Maintain your natural curves to reduce stress on the back.
- Align your upper body so your shoulders are directly over your hips.



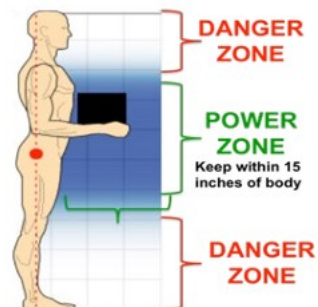
- Turn your entire body when you switch from one activity to another. Do not twist.
- Stand on a soft surface, such as a rubber pad or carpeted floor.



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When you carry objects keep these in mind:

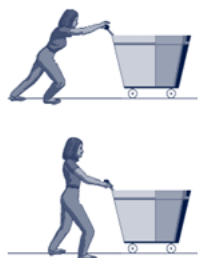
- Take small steps and move slowly.
- If, possible face the direction you want to carry the load before lifting it. If you have to change directions after you have lifted the load, pivot your feet, and do not twist your back.
- Keep the load close to your body.
- When you set the load down, remember to utilize your lifting skills.
- The farther you carry an object the lighter the load should be. Do not carry a heavy load for a long distance. Break it in to smaller loads, use proper handling equipment or get assistance.



AVOID PULLING



PUSHING IS PREFERABLE



Pushing and Pulling:

- Make sure you push, don't pull, whenever possible (pushing is less strenuous than pulling).
- Stay close to the load and get a good grip on the object.
- Don't lean forward.
- Use both arms and keep your stomach muscles tight.
- Let your leg muscles do the work.
- Brace your feet for maximum leg power, bend your knees, and maintain your natural curves of your back.

Pushing vs Pulling

Pushing a load is generally less stressful on your body because you use the weight of your body and maintain a more neutral posture. When you pull, your body is often twisted and you frequently use only one hand.