

Reduce Your Risk of Back Injuries

Helpful tips for lifting properly at the site

Construction tasks often require working around heavy equipment and being in situations that can cause serious injury. Follow these simple guidelines to ensure that you're lifting properly. If you start to experience any back pain from a specific task, listen to your body. Ignoring even minor back pain can lead to more serious injuries.

Be safe and healthy on the job with these helpful tips provided by Employer Resources Northwest.

Proper Lifting Techniques

- Wear gloves if you are lifting rough equipment.
- Clear away any potential obstacles before beginning to carry an object.
- Get a good grip and stable footing. Use your hands, not your fingers, to grip the load, and position your feet so that one foot is next to the load and one is behind it.
- Get under the load by bending your knees, not your back. Bending over at the waist to reach for the object can cause serious injury.
- Keep the load close to your body.
- Never twist your body when you are lifting. Turn your entire body by using your feet.
- Do not lift above the shoulders or below waist level.

Size up the Load

Before lifting an object, check its weight. Decide if you can handle it alone or if you need assistance. As a rule, most men should not lift more than 37 pounds, and most women should not lift more than 28 pounds. If a load is heavier than you can handle, take the following steps:

- Get someone to help.
- Break it down into smaller loads if possible.
- Use lifts or other equipment as aids. These tools were made for heavy lifting.

Lifting as a Team

When others are helping you lift, teamwork is very important. If you're going to be carrying the load to another place at the construction site, both of you should coordinate this prior to lifting the object. Check the route and clearance. One worker needs to be able to observe and direct the other. Lifting and lowering should be done in unison. Don't let the load drop suddenly without warning your partner.

Get Fit!

People who are in poor physical condition are at greater risk for back problems. A conditioning program that includes aerobics, weight training and stretching exercises will help you prepare your body for the rigors of lifting. If lifting is a regular part of your job, you may also want to consider wearing a back-belt for added support.

Jobsite: _____ Date: _____

Name of Employee (Please Print)	Signature of Employee

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