

Preventing Back Pain at Work and at Home

Guidelines for Protecting Your Back

- Plan ahead what you want to do and do not be in a hurry.
- Position yourself close to the object you want to lift.
- Separate your feet shoulder-width apart to give yourself a solid base of support.



- Bend at the knees.
- Tighten your stomach muscles.
- Lift with your leg muscles as you stand up.
- Don't try to lift by yourself an object that is too heavy or an awkward shape.
- Get help.

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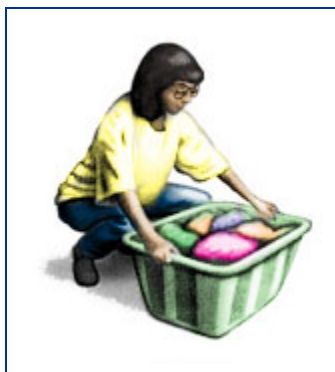
Picking Up a Light Object:

To lift a very light object from the floor, such as a piece of paper, lean over the object, slightly bend one knee and extend the other leg behind you. Hold on to a nearby chair or table for support as you reach down to the object.



Picking Up a Heavy Object:

Whether you are lifting a heavy laundry basket or a heavy box in your garage, remember to get close to the object, bend at the knees, and lift with your leg muscles. Do not bend at your waist.



When lifting luggage, stand along side of the luggage, bend at your knees, grasp the handle and straighten up.

Holding An Object:

While you are holding the object, keep your knees slightly bent to maintain your balance. If you have to move the object to one side, avoid twisting your body. Point your toes in the direction you want to move and pivot in that direction. Keep the object close to you when moving.



Placing an Object on a Shelf:



If you must place an object on a shelf, move as close as possible to the shelf. Spread your feet in a wide stance, positioning one foot in front of the other to give you a solid base of support. Do not lean forward and do not fully extend your arms while holding the object in your hands.

If the shelf is chest high, move close to the shelf and place your feet apart and one foot forward. Lift the object chest high, keep your elbows at your side and position your hands so you can push the object up and on to the shelf. Remember to tighten your stomach muscles before lifting.

Supporting Your Back While Sitting:

When sitting, keep your back in a normal, slightly arched position. Make sure your chair supports your lower back. Keep your head and shoulders erect. Make sure your working surface is at the proper height so you don't have to lean forward. Once an hour, if possible, stand, and stretch. Place your hands on your lower back and gently arch backward.

