

# Preventing Injuries from Ergonomic Hazards

## Lifting and Carrying

### Make the Workplace Safer

- Design the workplace so workers have enough space to move safely when lifting and carrying.
- Provide smaller boxes or containers to make lifting easier.
- Reduce the need for lifting and carrying. Provide hand trucks and other lifting devices, and keep them in good condition.
- Provide training in safe lifting methods.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Ergonomic hazards** are caused by poor design of the workplace and equipment. They produce wear and tear on the body. They can cause serious pain and injury to the hands, arms, neck, back, and other parts of the body.

### Follow Safe Work Practices

#### 1. Plan your lift before you start

- Don't try to carry more than you can handle. Make extra trips if necessary or ask for help.
- Don't overload boxes or containers.
- Use gloves if necessary.
- Make sure you have a clear path to where you are carrying the load.



#### 2. Lifting

- Get as close as possible to the load before lifting.
- Lift with your legs, not your back.
- Keep your head up, back straight, and bend at your knees.
- Don't lift with your hands only.



#### 3. Moving the load

- Keep the load close to your body.
- Look where you are going. Don't lift if you can't see over the load.
- Move your feet instead of twisting your body.



#### 4. Lowering

- When setting the load down, let your leg muscles carry it down.
- Be sure your fingers and toes are clear before setting the load down.

## Bending and Reaching

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### Make the Workplace Safer

- Set up work processes to limit the need for reaching or stooping.
- Provide storage for heavy items on lower shelves to avoid reaching.
- Provide ladders and footstools of the right size, and keep them in good condition.

### Follow Safe Work Practices

- Don't bend or reach to get a heavy or awkward item. Ask for help to lift and move it properly.
- Don't reach above your shoulders.
- Never use a box, cart, or other equipment to reach for objects. Use a ladder or footstool.
- Push carts instead of pulling them, where possible.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Experts say back belts are not effective in preventing back injuries, and in some cases may **increase** the chance of back injury. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends that employers **not** rely on back belts to protect workers, but instead set up an ergonomics program that includes workplace assessment, hazard reduction, and worker training.

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## Repetitive Movements

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### Make the Workplace Safer

- Provide mechanical equipment to do repetitive tasks where possible.
- Rotate tasks, especially those that require using the same motion over and over.
- Provide floor mats to protect against constant impact with hard surfaces.

### Follow Safe Work Practices

- Often take a few moments to stretch, especially if you spend a lot of time carrying loads, bending, reaching, or repeating the same motion.
- Use good posture.
- When walking or standing for long periods, take breaks and rotate tasks if possible.
- When sitting for long periods, make sure your lower back is supported, take breaks, and rotate tasks if possible.