



EMORY UNIVERSITY | Environmental Health and Safety Office
Research Administration

TOOLBOX TALKS

SUPERVISOR INSTRUCTIONS:

- Use toolbox trainings to encourage safety/environmental discussions during monthly meetings with employees.
- Campus Services' employees should maintain the employee sign-in sheet in their department's safety/environmental compliance binder as a record of training. All other groups should maintain a record of training in accordance with their Division's training procedures.

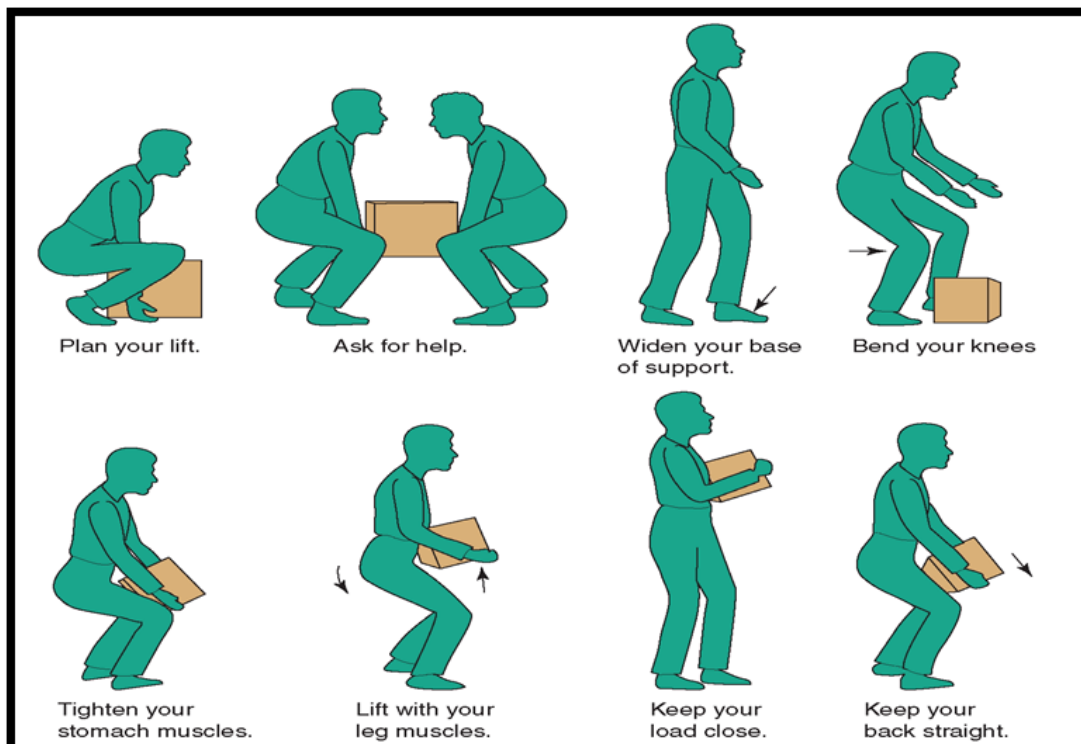
Have you ever lifted something and immediately thought to yourself "Ouch! Why did I do that?" or "What was I thinking? I know better than that!" Believe it or not, most people have.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than one million workers suffer back injuries each year and back injuries account for one out of every five workplace injuries. Many of those injuries occurred while lifting. A back injury can have a permanent effect on a worker's life.



Safe Lifting Techniques

You have probably heard about safe lifting techniques before, but "knowing" and "doing" are very different things. It is important to make those techniques a part of your routine. Always think about what you are about to lift before you lift it. It may take some time to analyze the situation, ask for help, or use a lifting device, but think about the alternative. A back injury can result in days, weeks, or months away from work, not to mention pain that may never resolve.

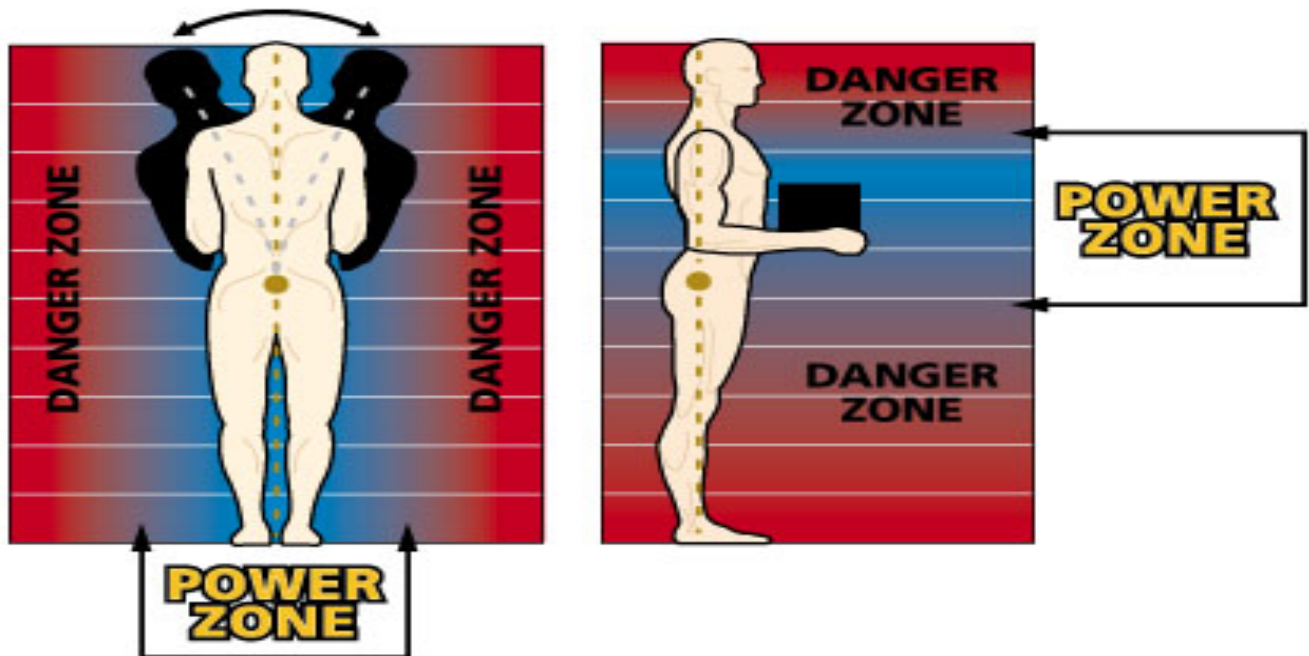


Safe Lifting Principles

- Stop and think.
 - ✓ Do you need help?
 - ✓ Is the load too big/awkward/heavy for you?
- Test the load. If it's too heavy, ask for help.
- If you lift:
 - ✓ Stand with your feet apart.
 - ✓ Bend the knees.
 - ✓ Use the abdominal muscles.
 - ✓ Keep the back straight.
 - ✓ Get a firm grip.
 - ✓ Keep the load close to the body.
 - ✓ Lift in stages.
 - ✓ Don't twist. Pivot on your feet.



The Power Zone



- Whenever possible, work in your power zone.
 - Comparable to the strike zone in baseball.
 - Close to the body, between mid-thigh and mid-chest.
- Also called the “hand-shake zone”. If you can shake hands with your work, you are minimizing excessive reach.
- This is where the arms and back can lift with the least amount of effort.
- Helps to maintain a neutral posture.
- Ensures you are working at a proper height and reach, which reduces your risk of injury.

The Workplace Athlete



You have a job that requires lots of physical exertion and activity. Think of yourself as a workplace athlete. Athletes have to prepare before they perform.

As a workplace athlete, what can you do to prevent an injury?

- Warm up
- Stretch
- Practice
- Proper positioning

Questions for Discussion

- 1) True or False: Twisting while lifting an object is okay, as long as you turn with your torso and not your hips.

False. You should minimize any turning or twisting of the body while lifting. If you need to turn your body, turn or pivot using your feet.

- 2) Marcus and Martha are cleaning out a dormitory after the students have left for the summer break. They are preparing to throw an old desk into a dumpster; the desk weighs about 100 pounds. Martha begins to lift help Marcus lift the desk, but Marcus insists that he can do it himself. Do you think Marcus made the right decision?

No. It would be much safer for Martha and Marcus to lift the desk together. One person can probably lift 100 pounds alone, but that doesn't mean that it is safe. When two people "team lift" a heavy object, it protects both of them from injury.

- 3) John has to retrieve a box from a shelf that is about 6 feet high. He isn't sure how much the box weighs, but it says that it contains 24 aerosol cans. He guesses it weighs about 20 pounds. What could John do to prevent an injury while lifting this box?

Use a mobile ladder stand. This will raise John up to keep him working in his power zone. It will prevent him from reaching over his head. Test the load. Ensure that the box is light enough for him to lift alone. Ask for help. If a second person is present, John can hand the box down rather than trying to climb down the ladder while holding the box.

Credits

Body Mechanics and Positioning. <http://what-when-how.com/nursing/body-mechanics-and-positioning-client-care-nursing-part-1/>

Proper Lifting Technique. <http://www.webmd.com/back-pain/proper-lifting-technique>

The Power Zone. <http://www.duckbilllaw.com/lnc/ergo.php>

Male Athlete Warming Up and Stretching. <http://www.superstock.com/stock-photos-images/1804R-8872>