

Safe lifting

Introduction:

For most of us, a day doesn't go by without lifting something. Whether at home or at work, it is important to use proper lifting techniques to reduce the risk of injury.

Safe procedures:

There are four keys to safe lifting:

1. Keep your head up.
2. Keep the natural curve in your back.
3. Lift with your legs.
4. Keep the load close.

Keep your head up: Do this by keeping your eyes and chin up. Focus your eyes at a 45-degree angle toward the ceiling.

Keep the natural curve in your back: When your eyes are focused at a 45-degree angle toward the ceiling, your back goes into its natural curve.

Lift with your legs: Your legs contain the largest, strongest muscles in your body. When lifting, maintain a wide stance and squeeze your legs and focus on using your legs to lift in a smooth and steady manner.

Keep the load close: Always keep the load close to your body. The closer the better. Handling the load away from your body can increase the chance for injuries such as strains and sprains to the shoulders, arms and back.

Other keys to safe lifting:

- Plan each lift.
- Communicate your lift with others. When needed, get someone to help.
- When moving a load, use your feet to change direction, avoid twisting.
- Don't jerk the load. Make each lift in a smooth motion.

In conclusion:

Before beginning to handle and lift materials, get your body loose and stretch. If you practice the four keys to safe lifting, you will reduce the risk of injury and maintain a healthy back.

For further information on stretching see the SFM 5-Minute Solution on proper stretching techniques.