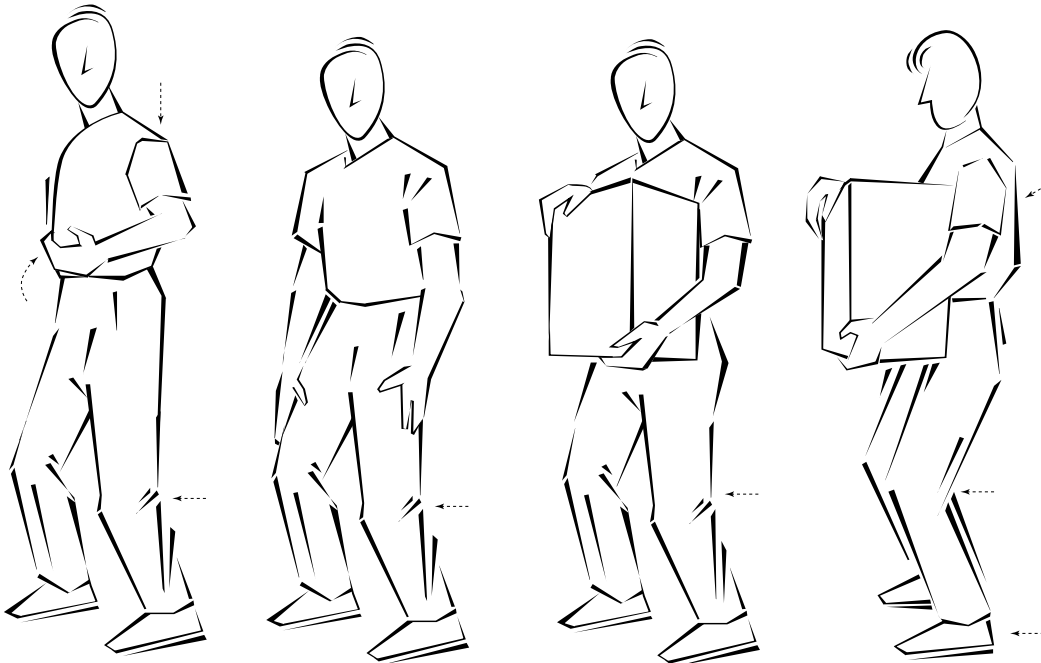


Lifting Basics

Most back injuries result from improper lifting. Not only is a back injury painful, it can also be permanent and end your career. Using the following guidelines for correct lifting will help you avoid injury.

Before you lift, check out the load and ask yourself:

- *Is this object too heavy or too awkward for me to lift and carry alone?*
- *How high do I have to lift it?*
- *How far do I have to carry it?*
- *Is the path clear?*
- *Is there a mechanical device I can use instead?*



How to Lift

- ◆ Make sure your footing is firm and that your feet are positioned correctly. Stand with your feet apart for balance: one foot close to the load, the other foot slightly behind you.
- ◆ Lower yourself into a squatting position with your back upright.
- ◆ When you lift, bend at the knees, not the waist.
- ◆ Use your whole hand, not just your fingers, to firmly grip the object.
- ◆ Hug the object close to you, keeping your back straight, and let the stronger muscles in your thighs do the actual lifting.
- ◆ Straighten your legs and move slowly.
- ◆ Never twist your body. If you must turn, point your feet in the direction you need to turn.
- ◆ Set the load down by slowly bending your knees, letting your legs do most of the work.
- ◆ Don't let go of the load until it's on the ground.

How Does Incorrect Lifting Affect You?

- ◆ Your back supports 70 to 80 percent of your bodyweight when you're standing up straight.
- ◆ When you bend at the waist without support, your back actually supports six times the weight you're lifting.