

Manual Handling Awareness

Please read this additional information about safe ways of manual handling in the work environment. Always ensure that you follow the guidelines to avoid any injury to yourself and/ or others.

If you are unclear of what the best way of moving an object is, ask your site contact or supervisor.

Basic principles of safe moving & handling

There are several factors that potentially present hazards when carrying out manual handling activities, and can be a combination of the load, the task, the environment, and the individual.

There are some simple steps you can take before and during moving a load.

- Plan the Lift – and carefully consider whether additional lifting aids are needed.
- Reduce the distance – where possible, if it is a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.
- Map out your route – and remove any objects that may cause an obstruction, observe if the route is well lit, if there steps or changes in level etc.
- Wear suitable clothing – that doesn't threaten to obstruct the lift, if there any sharp edges on the load, cover them or wear protective gloves.
- Ensure you have a good grip – on the load whether you are lifting, pushing, or pulling.
- Unstable loads, such as containers with bottles containing liquid, will be more difficult to handle so the safe maximum load for each person will be reduced.
- Ensure that you and/or the team you are working in are aware of the correct way to move an object using your body.

STEP 1 – Feet apart

Before you lift, or carry, or push, or pull . . . you need a stable position. Standing with your feet apart gives you a firm base to start your manual handling activity.

You don't need to stay rigid, move your feet if you need to during the lift to keep yourself steady.



STEP 2 – Bend knees

Your back is the weakest part and most prone to manual handling injuries. Your legs are the strongest. Always bend your knees and hips to start the lift, and don't stoop over the load.

A slight bending of the back is fine, you don't need to be a professional squatter to get your lift right!



STEP 3 – Back straight

Keep your back straight, when lifting and carrying. Don't make the common mistake of straightening your legs before you start to raise the load, as this can make your back bend further.



STEP 4 – Good grip, lift slowly

A good grip will help you lift and carry the load safely. Use your body and arms to help, rather than just hands only. If the load is too heavy or difficult to get a good grip, you might need some help.



STEP 5 – Hold close

Hold the load close, for stability, the heaviest side should be closest to your body.

The load should be hugged as close as possible to the body, during the lift and throughout the carry.



STEP 6 – Chin up

Keep your chin up and look forward.

It's tempting to look down at the load, but you need to look forward once you're holding the load securely, to make sure there are no trip hazards or unexpected obstructions ahead.

STEP 7 – Waist height, close to your body

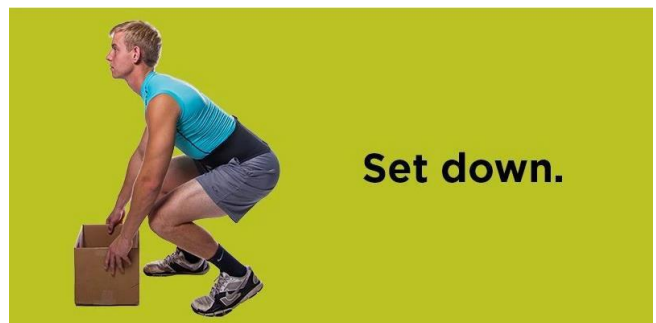
The load should be lifted to and carried at waist height. Any higher and you increase the strain on your arms, any lower and you risk stooping and damaging your back.



STEP 8 – Avoid twisting

If you need to turn move the feet and keep your hips in the same direction.

Don't twist your back or lean sideways, doing this, especially during a lift while your back is bent, puts you in a weak position and increases the risk of injuries.



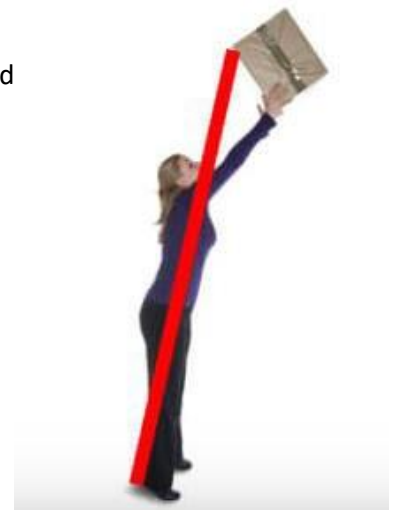
STEP 9 – Move smoothly

When you are lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling, the rule is the same, move smoothly. If you are needing to 'jerk' the load, chances are it's too heavy and you can't keep it under control.

STEP 10 – Set down

High risk activities

See below examples of incorrect posture/manual handling techniques which could result in an injury



TOP TIPS FOR MANUAL HANDLING

1 CONDUCT A MANUAL HANDLING RISK ASSESSMENT



2 ENSURE EMPLOYEES HAVE THE CORRECT MANUAL HANDLING TRAINING



3 USE MECHANICAL AIDS WHEREVER POSSIBLE

4 PLAN THE ROUTE BEFORE YOU START



5



5 WORK FROM A STABLE BASE

HUG THE LOAD



7 BEND YOUR KNEES



8 AVOID TWISTING OR LEANING

9 KEEP YOUR HEAD UP↑



KNOW YOUR LIMITS

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PUSH A LOAD RATHER THAN PULL IT



Good handling technique for pushing and pulling

- Push rather than pull a load, provided you can see over it and can control steering and stopping.
- Get a good grip on the item to be pushed or pulled. Hold the trolley between shoulder and waist height.
- Keep your back straight, stomach in, knees bent, and elbows in.
- Lean in the direction you' re pushing or pulling.
- Watch out for obstructions.
- The force required if you must travel up or down a slope or ramp can be very high. Get help from someone else whenever necessary.
- Keep feet well away from the load and go no faster than walking speed.
- Trolleys must be maintained in good working order, especially wheels.
- Wheels on trolleys must be large enough not to jolt the load, or get stuck, if there are any uneven surfaces.
- Travel over rough or uneven surfaces requires more force, so load weight might need to be reduced.



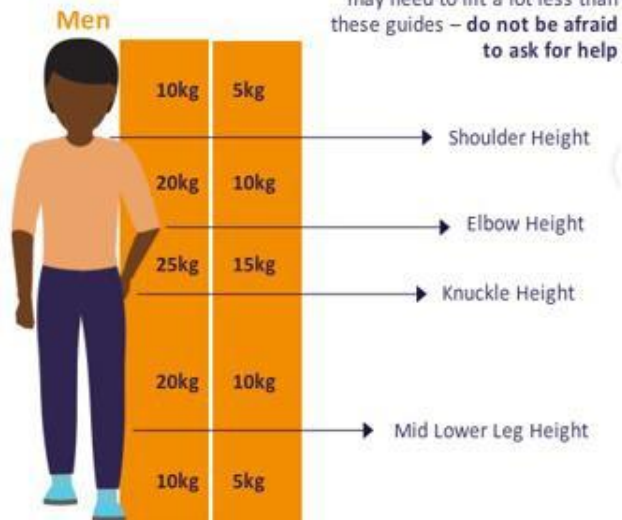
When more than one person is lifting an object:

- Work with someone of similar height and build if possible.
- Choose one person to call the signals.
- Lift from the hips at the same time, and then raise the load to the desired level.
- Move smoothly and together.



Guide to weight limits

As an individual you may be comfortable lifting more or you may need to lift a lot less than these guides – **do not be afraid to ask for help**



This diagram shows how where you hold or pick a weight from can affect how much can be lifted - for example, holding close to body at waist height 16kg can be carried for women, held away from body or at shoulder height that reduces to 10kg or 7kg

