



Protect Your Back!

Before you lift something, ask yourself these questions:

- How heavy is the load?
- Will it be awkward to control?
- Should I ask for help?
- Can it be moved mechanically with available equipment?
- Is it in an accessible position?
- Does it have sharp edges?
- Will it be slippery or awkward to lift?
- Do I need gloves or other protection?
- Is the new location accessible and ready to accept the item?
- Is my pathway clear?
- Will I be able to see where I am going?
- Is there a safe way to grip the load?



If you can't answer these questions, think twice about making the lift.

Body mechanics are KEY to lifting correctly:

- Your footing is a very important part of lifting. Your feet must be:
 - Close to the object.
 - Shoulder-width apart for good balance.
 - One foot slightly ahead of the other to help keep your center of gravity under control.
- Bend your knees and go down to a crouch—not to a full squat. Standing up from a full squat takes twice as much effort as standing from a crouch.
- Keep your back as straight and vertical as possible.
- Get a good, firm grip. Do not lift until your hold is strong and slip-proof.
- Lift by straightening your legs. Keep the load close to your body. Force needed to lift increases dramatically the further the load is from your body.
- When setting the load down:
 - Keep your back straight.
 - Bend your knees just as you did when you lifted the object.



Do not risk injuring your back; move the load mechanically or ask someone to help you.