

Introduction

In Canada in 2003, 30% of all on-the-job accidents reported involved back injuries, often caused when people lifted objects incorrectly.

Muscles are often damaged by movement that is sudden, unexpected, or unfamiliar. This damage is most likely to occur if the muscle:

- Lacks strength due to inactivity.
- Has not been warmed up and stretched before activity.
- Is tired due to repetitive movement, whole body vibration, or long periods of sitting or standing in one position
- Is forced, through improper technique or over-estimation of ability, to lift or carry more than its limit.



Except for colds, back pain is the leading reason for trips to the doctor.

Back injuries can be debilitating and long-term so think smart and lift correctly.

Critical Task Inventory

- Warm-up and Stretching
- Heavy / Awkward Object Handling

Warm-Up and Stretching

Hazard Assessment	F	S	P	R
Muscle Strain (S)	3	2	2	7

Precautionary Measures

Muscles should be warmed up gradually and lightly stretched before physically strenuous work is started.



Heavy/Awkward Object Handling

Hazard Assessment	F	S	P	R
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Lifting

- Place your feet shoulder width apart for good balance.
- Bend your knees and keep your back straight.
- Keep the load close to your body.
- Lift gradually with your legs and hips, keeping abdominals tight. Do not lift with back or waist.
- Lift smoothly and without jerking.
- Turn with your feet, not your hips or shoulders. Twisting can overload your spine.
- Lower the load by bending your legs – not your back.
- Use common sense and TAKE YOUR TIME.

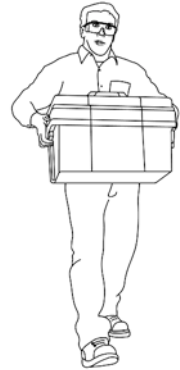


Frequency of Exposure (F)	Severity of Loss (S)	Probability of Loss (P)	F + S + P = Risk Rating (R)
1 = Up to Weekly 2 = Up to Daily 3 = 1+ Times / Day	1=Class C – Minor, non-disabling, non-disruptive 2=Class B – Serious injury or disruptive loss 3=Class A – Major injury, permanent disability or loss	1=Limited chance adverse event will occur 2=Adverse event likely to occur 3=Adverse event likely to occur soon	7 to 9 = High Risk 5 to 6 = Medium Risk 3 to 4 = Low Risk

Heavy/Awkward Object Handling

Carrying

- Keep the load close to the centre of your body.
- Consider using a back support, if available.

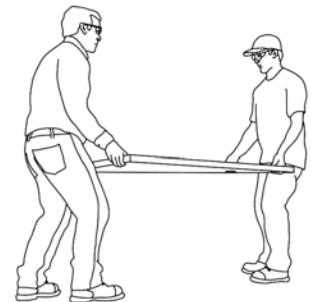


Repetitive Lifting

- Do not do heavy or repetitious lifting if there is a mechanical alternative.
- Reconfigure the work area to avoid awkward positions.
- Decrease the weight of each lift - split the load if you are able.
- Where possible, add grips to objects being handled.

Heavy Loads

- Do not lift more than you can handle.
- Avoid lifting higher than your shoulder height. Use a step stool or ladder if needed.
- Use a mechanical aid such as a dolly, crane, forklift or pallet jack where available.
- Ask for help whenever possible.
- Do not challenge your lifting abilities.



Get assistance with heavy and / or awkward objects.

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Type Of Hazard: H= Health (acute or chronic) S= Safety (people and equipment) Q= Quality P = Production E= Environment			