

# Lifting Safely: What you should know about lifting heavy items

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## Minimize the risk of work related injuries

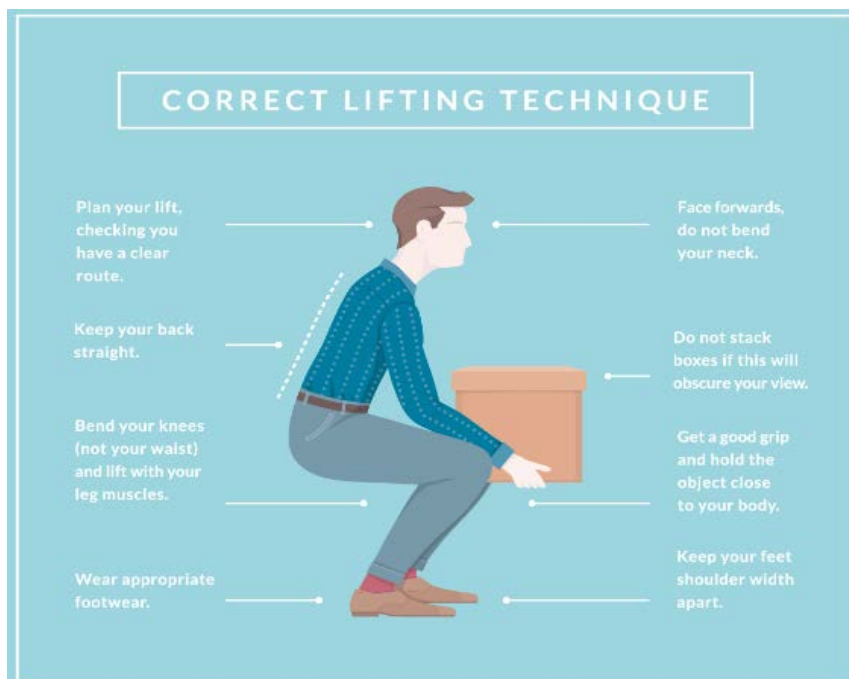
To minimize the risk of work related injuries, especially to the back, here are a few Do's and Don'ts related to lifting heavy items. In general, always look for alternatives to manual lifting and carrying when possible.

**Do:**

- Stay in good physical shape, especially if lifting and carrying heavy materials are daily activities
- Keep materials within easy reach
- Ensure you have a solid grip before lifting
- Test the weight of the object before lifting to avoid strains
- Keep your body close to the object and stand in a stable position
- Always lift with your legs, relieving the stress on your back

**Don't**

- Lift loads that you struggle to manage
- Move loads up or down stairs
- Move loads for distances
- Twist your back
- Bend to the side
- Lower the item if you are not in a stable position
- Lift an item that is too heavy or possibly too heavy
- Lift above your shoulders or below your knees



## Pulling vs. Pushing

Generally speaking, when moving materials pushing is preferable to pulling.

- **Pushing** allows you to use large muscle groups and apply more force to the load.
- **Pulling** carries a greater risk of strain and injury.

### Tips for Pulling

- Keep your feet hip-width apart.
- When bending forward to pull, drop your hips and bend your knees.
- Concentrate on keeping your core muscles tight to decrease pressure on your back.
- Always face the object you are pulling. Take small, backward steps once you start to move.

### Push Before Pulling

- It is safer to push rather than pull.
- Keep your back straight and bend your knees.
- Do not twist at your hips to push, but rather keep your core tight and use your legs and body weight to move the object.
- Face the load squarely rather than at the top or bottom of the object.

### No strings attached chiropractic consultation

Dr. Stephen Dohoney offers a **free consultation**. Your personal consultation with Dr. Dohoney will include a non-invasive, painless, SEMG (Surface Electromyography) Exam which produces a visual comparison between an ideal spine and your spinal muscle activity.

## Preventative care to help strengthen your spine

Take the time to condition your back muscles to better support your spine and withstand stress with back strengthening exercises. Doing so can help you avoid back and neck pain.

Most back strengthening exercises focus on the core muscles, including the abdominal, gluteus, and hip muscles, in addition to muscles surrounding the spine. All of the core muscles are essential in supporting and minimizing strain on the spine.

Back-strengthening exercises can result in:

- Reduced stress on the spinal discs and joints
- Better spinal alignment and overall posture
- Ease with movements that may cause pain, such as bending, twisting, or lifting

In most cases, strengthening exercises are recommended 2 or 3 times a week, and as part of an overall program of stretching and aerobic exercise. Some examples include:



Quadruped arm/leg raise



Standing hamstring stretch



Side plank



Cat and camel