



Lead, Serve, Support

AN OWNER'S GUIDE TO A HEALTHY BACK

Although preventable, **back injuries continue to be a leading cause of work-related injuries and lost workdays.** According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics:

- More than **one millions workers suffer back injuries each year.**
- Back injuries account for **one out of five injuries/illnesses in the workplace.**
- **Eighty percent (80%) of these injuries affect the low back and are associated with manual material handling.**



HERE'S A FEW TIPS TO HELP PROTECT YOUR BACK

POSTURE MATTERS

Keep your spine aligned while sitting or standing. When sitting, keep your feet flat on the floor and lean backwards against the back of the chair, making the chair support your body.

Avoid standing in one place or bending forward long periods. For relief, try:

- Walking around briefly;
- Resting one foot on a step or block approximately 6-8" high; or
- Crouching down periodically to relax your back.

If you have been leaning forward, lean backwards to stretch your back.

Take micro-breaks to stretch your muscles – to help ease muscle tension, improve blood flow/circulation, and reduce fatigue.



PLAN EVERY LIFT – *even light objects, if lifted incorrectly can cause an injury*

Analyze the load – How heavy is it? Will be difficult to reach or awkward to handle?

Know your limits - get help for heavy or awkward loads.

Reduce the weight of the load - divide heavy loads into several smaller loads.

Use mechanical devices whenever possible, i.e., a cart, dolly, hand truck, furniture moving sliders or moving straps.

Clear space around the object – so you have enough room to lift safely.

Get close to the load to avoid overreaching or stretching.

Use proper body mechanics – keep your back straight, bend your knees, & lift with your legs.

- **Avoid twisting** - move your feet and turn your body.
- **Don't overreach** - use a step stool or ladder if lifting objects above your shoulders.
- **Avoid reaching over obstructions** - move the object(s) or change your position.

Carry the load between your shoulders and waist to avoid straining your back.

Be sure you can see over the load so you don't trip and fall.

Take time for safety - Don't rush; pace yourself, and take micro breaks between lifts when moving a number of items.

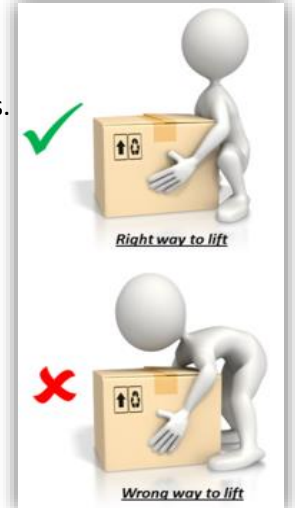
MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Exercise daily to build and maintain strong muscles in your back, abdomen and legs.

Maintain a healthy weight - excess weight puts added pressure on your spine and low back.

Invest in a comfortable mattress which supports your back's natural curves, allowing you to wake refreshed.

Quit smoking - nicotine restricts blood flow to the discs cushioning the spine, causing them to age faster than normal.



TAKE TIME FOR SAFETY... AND REMEMBER... WATCH OUT FOR YOUR BACK!

SAFETY MATTERS