



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.

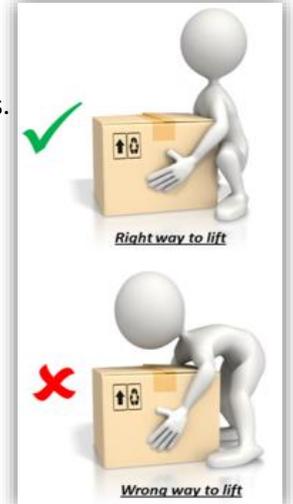
#### MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

**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