

# ToolBox Talks from the SWPA Safety Committee

1, 2, 3

LIFT  
NO NOT LIKE THAT!



## Before You Lift...

Preparation is a crucial part of ergonomic lifting. Begin by evaluating the lifting task for safety. *Know how much you can safely lift and make sure the load doesn't exceed it.*

**Is the object too large or awkward to lift and carry safely?**

**Will you be able to get a good grip?** Think about where you're putting the object ahead of time.

***Ensure the path is unobstructed, dry, and the distance isn't too great.***

Is the load too heavy or ungainly, will it obstruct your vision? If it is too far or lifted overhead, you'll need to find a safe alternative. Is it a two-person job or more?

Do you need a hand truck, dolly, pushcart, or another tool? Could gloves give you a better grip?

Once you have a plan for lifting ergonomics, you should stretch and warm up your muscles before lifting.

Loosen up your back with lower-back rotations. Stretch your hamstrings and get the blood flowing – these measures will reduce your risk of injury.

## Lift This Way...

You've probably heard, "lift with your knees, not with your back." You should never bend forward to lift a heavy object. You should squat, secure the load, and stand by straightening your legs while keeping your back straight or slightly arched.

- Stand as close to the load as possible
- Plant your feet shoulder-width apart with one foot slightly ahead of the other
- Bend at the hips and knees only until you're deep in a squat position
- Keep your head up and straight with your shoulders back to keep your back straight
- Hold the load close to your body at waist height
- Engage your core muscles as you push against the ground and straighten your legs
- Never twist your torso. Stay "nose between your toes."
- Never lift a heavy item above shoulder level.
- Never carry a load that obstructs your vision.
- Never hold your breath while lifting, moving, and setting the load down.
- Taking small steps and keeping a good grip with all your fingers

## The Safe Way...

Setting down a heavy object is just as dangerous as lifting. You'll want to reverse the lift process, following the same ergonomic lifting principles:

- Keep the load close to your body and your back straight or slightly arched
- Squat down, bending only at the knees and hips
- Tighten your stomach muscles (engage your core) as you lower yourself



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Toolbox Talks are provided as a courtesy to SWPA members. Please remember they are to assist you in developing a safety plan. Keep in mind OSHA, Department of Labor and Insurance requirements may change over time and it is your responsibility to make sure your safety plan is up to date. Reference: OSHA, NIOSH, FRA, SafetyCulture.com



**DOBBS**  
EQUIPMENT

