

# Workplace ergonomics: Safe lifting techniques to avoid strains and sprains

## There's more

Please refer to additional materials that accompany this topic, which have helped prevent injuries at other organizations. [saif.com/ergo](http://saif.com/ergo)

Physical capacity, health, physical fitness, and fatigue all affect a worker's ability to lift safely. Here are a few other factors to consider when designing lifting tasks with ergonomics in mind.

**Limit load weight** and encourage the use of lift equipment. To minimize fatigue and risk of injuries, avoid lifting items of any weight more than 15 times a minute.

**Carry loads close to your body**, tighten abdominal muscles, and push instead of pulling whenever possible. Holding a load

farther away from the body adds more strain to shoulders, back, and arms.

**Position loads near the center of your body** (roughly between your shoulders and upper thighs). Store heavy items so you don't have to bend down or reach up to access them.

**Limit the distance heavy loads must be carried.** Avoid twisting while lifting, carrying, or placing a load.

**Plan the lift in advance.** Find secure hand holds so the load is less likely to slip.



## Steps for safe lifting

1. Assess the load and plan the lift.
2. Position your body in front of the load. Spread your feet shoulder's width apart for balance; put one foot back to boost stability.
3. Lift with knees flexed using your leg muscles, but avoid deep squatting. Maintain the natural curve of your spine throughout the task.
4. Position load close to your body; tighten abdominal muscles.
5. Shift the load to one side so you can see where you're going.
6. When putting the load down, maintain the curve of your spine and use your leg muscles for motion and support.