

Manual handling

Reason	Every year, a significant proportion of all injuries at work are caused by manual handling. If you get it wrong today you will suffer the consequences tomorrow.
Outline	This talk covers considerations and good techniques for manual handling.



Simple aids like wheelbarrows reduce the risk of injury



Use mechanical aids where possible



Some jobs can't be done safely on your own



Back injuries can be permanent



Poor manual handling techniques can cause serious injuries.

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Considerations

1. Your employer should assess all manual handling activities and try to avoid them where they can.
2. Your employer should provide training in manual handling.
3. Your employer should provide mechanical aids where possible (such as forklifts or pallet trucks).
4. Know your capabilities and only tackle jobs you can handle, otherwise seek help.
5. Check if there is a clear walkway with good lighting to the work area.
6. Establish the weight of the load before starting to lift.
7. Wear gloves to protect against cuts and safety boots to protect from falling loads.
8. Carry out a trial lift by rocking the load from side to side, then try lifting it a small distance to get a feel for it.

Good handling techniques

1. Stand reasonably close to the load, feet hip-width apart, one foot slightly forward to maintain balance.
2. Flex your knees and maintain a natural posture (your spine curves naturally, even when your back is straight).
3. Avoid stooping or a deep squat when starting a lift.
4. Get a secure grip on the load.
5. A good lifting technique uses the strong muscles in your legs.
6. Keep the load close to your body but don't carry a load that obscures your vision.
7. Lift slowly and smoothly, avoiding jerky movements.
8. Avoid twisting your body when lifting or carrying a load.
9. When lifting to a height from the floor, do it in two stages if possible.
10. When two or more people lift a load, one person must give directions to co-ordinate the lift.



What checks should you carry out before lifting?

What personal protective equipment (PPE) should you wear and why?

How would you lift an object safely?

What should happen when two or more people are lifting a load?



Your spine curves naturally (even when your back is straight). This posture should be maintained during manual handling activities.

Now inform your workers of the company policy regarding manual handling.