



Lifting

Although forklifts, dollies and carts are often used to move materials and equipment, some objects must be moved by hand. Improper lifting of camera, grip and set lighting equipment and set decoration and construction materials can lead to one of the most painful and costly work injuries an employee can suffer – a back injury.

Whether lifting equipment and material is your primary duty or just something done occasionally, proper safe lifting techniques are essential. Injuries can occur any time: during prep, filming or striking the set.

Strains and sprains, fractures, and bruises are the most common injuries, and most of the time they are caused by unsafe work practices. No matter how knowledgeable or skilled we are, we all need to be reminded about ways to avoid injuries. Proper lifting is a learned skill that needs to be practiced to keep the proper lifting methods fresh in your mind.

Practice in lifting is as important as practice in first aid. You can practice even when you can't actually lift something. How? Before lifting, think your way through the procedure. Practice within your mind the proper steps in lifting the item.

Probably everyone has been told not to stoop over to lift. Your leg muscles, not your backbone, should do the work. Unfortunately, stooping over to lift is a habit we form during childhood. One way to break a habit is to form new ones. For example, if you stoop over to lift, retrain yourself to lift with your legs. Keep reminding yourself to do it this way until it becomes a new habit.

To lift a load to a point above your shoulders, plan ahead so you can rest the load about waist high, then change your grip and finish the lift. An even better idea is to get help.

Another common mistake is getting your fingers caught between the load and other surfaces. Lift the load a little so that one edge rests on the floor or table first, then let your hands slide up the sides so that when the full weight comes down, your fingers are not caught underneath. When walking through doorways or between machines, tuck your hands in or turn the load so that your fingers won't be trapped between the load and the other surface.

Finally, size up the job before you start the lift. If it is too big or awkward, don't be afraid to ask for help. After all, it is not just weight that makes a load a two-person job, it is also the size and shape.

1. Before lifting, check the load for slivers, jagged edges, burrs, rough or slippery surfaces, and protruding nails.
2. Wear appropriate protective clothing (gloves, safety shoes, etc.).
3. Ask for help when a load cannot be handled safely by one person because of excessive weight, bulkiness or awkward shape of the load.
4. Check your route of travel for any slip, trip or fall hazards before you lift.
5. When lifting as a group, one person should communicate commands to the others. Indicate any changes in elevation, cornering or rotating. Always give adequate warnings before setting your portion of the load down.
6. Take extra precautions around liftgates. (See Liftgate Safety)



7. Recommended Lifting Procedures:

- Stand close to the load with your feet spread shoulder width apart.
- Squat down, bending at the hips and knees, while keeping your back straight.
- Grip the load firmly, tighten your abdomen, and use your legs to lift the object.
- Lift in one continuous motion while keeping your back straight.
- Remember to breathe normally while you lift. Steady breathing prevents you from becoming fatigued.
- Keep the load close to your body. The closer the load is to your body, the less pressure it exerts on your back.
- Change directions by moving your feet. Never twist your body.
- When you set the load down, bend only at the hips and knees while

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