

Manual Handling

Thousands of people every year suffer back pain and strains and sprains, fractures and hernias due to lifting and pushing/pulling loads.

This can be because the loads are too heavy, too large or too awkward.

It can also be because incorrect techniques or postures are being used or because you are doing the activity repeatedly.

- To protect against back trouble later on in life **avoid** manually lifting loads by using mechanical aids on site - hoists, forklifts, cranes, gin wheels, etc.
- If the load has to be lifted manually, consider splitting the load, or breaking up if possible, to minimise the weight.
- If you **have** to lift manually, follow the basic guidelines that start with thinking about the load you have to lift.
- **Wear** gloves wherever possible to **avoid** cuts, scratches or puncture wounds. Safety boots or shoes will protect your feet if anything falls.
- Get somebody to **help** you if the load is large or awkward.
- Size up the load and make a **trial** lift by standing as close to the load as possible and lifting one corner - remembering to bend at your knees first.
- Having planned your lift, ensure there is nothing in your way to **hinder** your lift and movement.
- Take up a good lifting position, feet slightly **apart** and pointing in the direction you are going and travel with a firm grip of the load.
- **Raise** your head as you start to lift - lift using your legs not your back, remembering to **keep** the back in its natural curve.
- As you move, **keep** the load close to your body and **make sure** you can see where you are going.
- **Do not** twist your body - this is a major cause of back injuries. Instead, move your feet to protect your back from strains.
- Bend at your knees when you deposit a load, making sure you are not overstretching.
- Note: There are now some loads that are considered unacceptable to lift by hand. These include kerbs and heavy concrete blocks weighing 20kg and more.

Questions:

- 1 What are the possible consequences of poor manual handling?
- 2 What can you do to minimise the risk from manual handling?
- 3 If you have to lift and carry, what techniques should you adopt?

Remember:

**Avoid the pain, do not let your back take the strain
Bend at your knees and your back won't seize**

Further Information:-

CIP Manual, Section 12
IPSL Manual Handling Card L107