

# Proper Lifting To Prevent Back Injuries

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are available in Spanish at [gemplers.com](http://gemplers.com).

## Key Points:

- Improper lifting can cause serious back injuries.
- Don't lift if you're in poor physical shape.
- Keep your back straight.
- Bend your knees. Don't bend from your waist.
- Ask for help if you need it.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.

Before you begin, locate an object normally used in your operation to demonstrate proper lifting techniques. Look for an object that might present a challenge.

## Many of us have had a back injury.

- Would anyone like to share an experience? How did it happen?

Note to trainer: Allow a few moments for workers to relay their personal experiences.

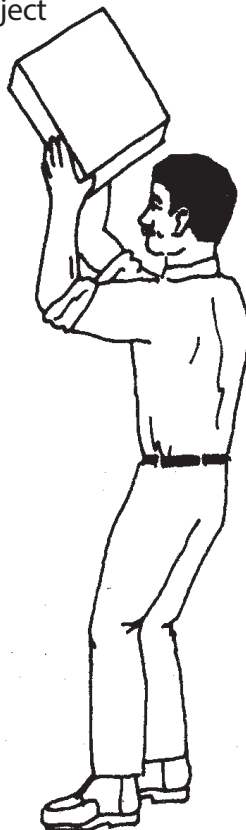
## What causes serious back injuries?

- As you know, back injuries can be very painful.
- One cause of serious back injuries is improper lifting.
- Here are some examples of improper lifting:

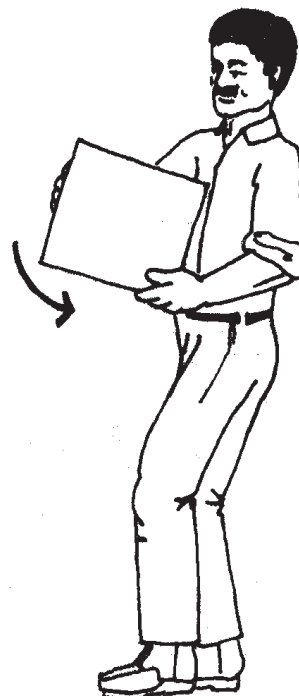
Bending from the waist to pick up an object



Lifting an object higher than chest high



Twisting your body while you're lifting or carrying an object



(Continued on back)

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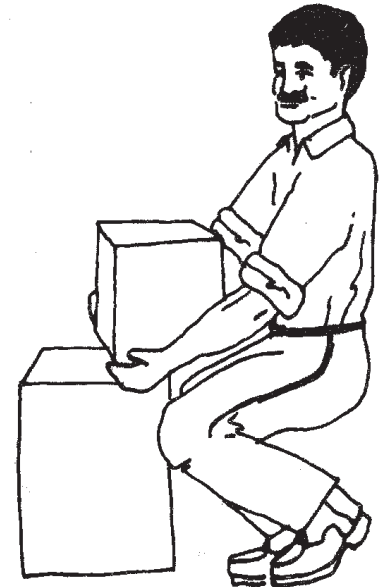
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# Proper Lifting To Prevent Back Injuries

## What is the proper way to lift?

- Let's demonstrate proper lifting. I'll do it first. Then let's see how you do.  
**Note to trainer:** Use an object normally lifted in your operation with the following steps. Be sure all of the trainees can easily see what you are doing and explain each step as you go.
- Size up the object you'll be lifting. Stand close to the object. Check for sharp edges, nails and other hazards. See if you think you can lift it by yourself. If not, ask for help.
- Plan ahead where you're going to move the object. Make sure the path from its current location to its final destination is clear and free of hazards.
- Get a firm footing. Check your shoes to make sure they provide good traction and that your shoelaces are tied. Part your feet to give you good balance. Then put one foot slightly in front of the other.
- Get in position. Keeping your back straight, bend your knees to lower yourself within reach of the object. Do NOT bend at the waist.
- Get a good grip. Use both hands. Grip gloves are very helpful.
- Lift with your legs, not your back. Stand up by straightening your legs. Remember, your back should remain straight, and you should not bend at the waist. Carry the object to its new location, keeping it close to your body. Don't bounce it around.
- Bend your knees to set the object down. Again, be sure to keep your back straight, and do not bend at the waist.



## Now, it's your turn

- **Note to trainer:** Have each trainee demonstrate proper lifting. If you see mistakes, ask others in the group to point out the proper way to lift.

## Are there any questions?

**Note to trainer:** Take time to answer the trainees' questions. Then review the **Do's and Don'ts of Proper Lifting.**

### Proper Lifting Do's and Don'ts

#### DO:

- Get a firm footing and a good grip.
- Wear shoes with good traction.
- Lift objects only chest high.
- Take your time.
- Ask for help if you need it.

#### DON'T:

- Bend from the waist.
- Lift objects higher than chest high.
- Reach below your feet to pick up an object.
- Twist your body while you're lifting.
- Lift an object you can't handle alone.

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