

## Back Safety Awareness

**I**n the workplace, when you are lifting or moving heavy objects, or doing strenuous physical labor on a daily basis, your back can wear down over time. Learn how to avoid injuries with safe and proper techniques.

### Before lifting and carrying a heavy object, take a few moments to assess the situation:

- How far will you have to carry the load?
- Is the way clear of clutter, cords, slippery areas, overhangs, stairs, curbs, or uneven surfaces?
- Are there closed doors? Ask someone to hold a door open or place a wedge under the door to hold it open.
- Once you pick the load up, will you be able to see over the load, or will the load block your view?
- Can the load be disassembled, carried in pieces, and then reassembled?
- Take a few moments to "size up the load." Test the weight by lifting a corner of the object. If it is too heavy or if the object is an odd shape, **STOP!** Ask for help or use a push cart or mechanical assistance.

### Quick Take

- Assess the situation before lifting or carrying a load.
- Use proper lifting techniques regardless of the load size.
- Please contact [EHRHS](#) to schedule training on back safety.

**If you repeat an unhealthy position or movement, small injuries begin to add up. If you do not change how or what you are doing, more serious injuries can occur.**



### Proper Lifting

- The key to lifting safely is keeping your back straight or slightly arched. **NEVER USE YOUR BACK TO LIFT!**
- Start the lift by putting your feet close to the object. Get a firm footing.
- Center your body over your feet.
- Squat down like a professional weightlifter, bending your knees.
- Keep your back straight or slightly arched.
- You want your legs to do the lifting, not your back.
- Grasp the load securely with your hands, and pull the load close to you.
- Smoothly lift by straightening the knees.
- Setting the load down is the reverse of lifting.