

Lifting and Carrying Safely

Protecting your back in daily life

How to lift

1. **Think first.** Is it too heavy? Can it be split, slid, or lifted by two people? Where are you putting it down? Clear the path.
2. **Stand close to the object**, feet apart, one slightly forward.
3. **Bend your knees and hips, not your back.** Keep the natural curve in your lower back.
4. **Get a firm grip** and hold the load **close to your body**, at waist level.
5. **Lift smoothly with your legs.** No jerking, no sudden pull.
6. **Do not twist while lifting.** Turn by moving your feet, not your spine. Twisting under load is what injures discs.
7. Set it down the same way — bend the knees, keep it close.

THE TWO THINGS THAT CAUSE MOST BACK INJURIES

1. **Bending and twisting at the same time** — picking something up beside you and swinging round to put it down.
2. **A light object lifted carelessly.** Most back injuries do not happen lifting a heavy sack. They happen picking up a bucket, a child, or a slipper without thinking.

Treat every lift the same way, however light.

EVERYDAY SITUATIONS

Carrying shopping: split it into two bags, one in each hand, rather than one heavy bag on one side.

Bags and rucksacks: use both straps. A heavy bag on one shoulder tilts the whole spine.

Children: squat down, hold them close to your chest, and stand with your legs. Do not carry a child on one hip for long periods.

Sweeping, swabbing and washing clothes: these keep you bent for long periods. Use a long-handled broom and mop, sit on a low stool rather than squatting, and raise the washing to waist level.

Overhead: use a stool to bring the object to chest level rather than reaching up and pulling it down over your head.

AFTER BACK SURGERY OR AN ACUTE BACK INJURY

Do not lift anything heavier than about **2-3 kg** (a filled water bottle) until we clear you. Avoid bending forward, twisting, and sitting for long stretches. Use the **log roll** to get out of bed: roll onto your side keeping shoulders and hips together, drop the legs, push up with the arms.

Search: lifting technique, how to lift heavy weight, back care, bending, carrying

