

Manual Handling

Following are some tips to assist in preventing manual-handling injuries.

1. Whenever possible, kneel or crouch down rather than bend from the waist, in order to avoid neck and back problems.
2. Only carry children when necessary. The correct way to carry a child is to:
 - a. hold the child facing the worker as close to their body as possible;
 - b. place one arm under the child's buttocks and the other arm supporting the child's back; and,
 - c. try to avoid carrying children on the hip because this may strain the worker's back.
3. When lifting awkward loads, be careful to lift with a balanced and comfortable posture.
4. Always lift from a crouched position rather than from the waist.
5. Minimise the need to reach above shoulder height if possible; use a ladder instead.
6. Avoid extended reaching.
7. Share the load if equipment is heavy, long or awkward.
8. When lifting infants out of cots:
 - i. lean close against the cot;
 - ii. raise the child as close as possible to the body; and,
 - iii. do not stretch over and lift across the width of the cot.
9. When sliding, pushing or pulling equipment, e.g. trestles or tables, ask for assistance or organise a team to lift the equipment.
10. Use equipment and furniture that can be moved around safely, easily and as comfortably as possible; e.g. use furniture on wheels.
11. Move equipment when children are not around to prevent the possibility of an accident or injury.
12. Rearrange storage so it is easier and safer to remove and replace items.
13. Lift only within the limits of own strength; ask for assistance if necessary.
14. Ensure you can see where you are going when carrying equipment and children.
15. Be extra careful when lifting a child with additional needs.
16. Never twist while lifting.
17. Check that floors and other walking surfaces are uncluttered, even and not slippery.

18. Ensure the workplace is tidy.
19. Make sure that there is adequate space to perform each task.
20. Ensure all equipment is maintained regularly.
21. Make sure lighting is adequate.

Maintaining the correct storage and shelving height is important to prevent slips, falls and strains. The best height for handling loads is around waist level and the acceptable height for lifting loads is to any point between the knees and shoulders.

Seldom-used objects should be stored at shoulder-to-raised-arm height; however, use a ladder to avoid stretching. If reaching for anything stored lower than your hands, remember to bend at the knees. Mechanical aids such as ladders and trolleys should be used where possible. It is also important to check that storage heights are safe for other workers.

Points to avoid injury

Follow these points to avoid injury while lifting:

1. Place your feet in a stride position.
2. Keep your breastbone as elevated as possible.
3. Bend your knees.
4. Brace your stomach muscles.
5. Hold the object close to the centre of gravity, around your navel.
6. Move your feet, not your spine.
7. Prepare to move in a forward-facing direction.
8. Ask for assistance when it is not possible to lift an object on your own. To organise a team lift, follow these steps:
 - a. Ask a colleague who is willing and able to help – about the same physical size and shape as you are.
 - b. Agree on a plan of action: Coordinated movement during a lift is important.
 - c. One person should act as the team leader and call the lift as timing is also important.
9. All workers should receive training in safe manual-handling techniques.