

playing it safe

Safety and health tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance and safety specialists at Poms & Associates Insurance Brokers, Inc..

Eliminate Back Pain

Use proper lifting techniques

Lifting is such a common activity that it is often forgotten that there is a right way to do it. In fact, lower back injuries are the most common work-related injury, and can cause a lifetime of pain. Following these simple guidelines, learning to lift properly today will help you to avoid back pain tomorrow.

Proper Lifting Techniques

- Wear gloves if you are lifting rough equipment.
- Get a good grip and good footing: Use your hands, not your fingers, to grip the load, and position your feet so that one foot is next to the load and one is behind it.
- Get under the load by bending your *knees*, not your back. This is the most important lifting technique to remember.
- Keep the load close to your body.

- Never twist your body when you are lifting. Turn your entire body by using your feet.

When lifting:

- Do not twist your body when you are lifting. Instead, turn your entire body by using your legs.
- Do not lift above the shoulders or below waist level.

Size up the Load

Before lifting an object, check its weight. As a general rule, most men should not lift more than 37 pounds, and most women should not lift more than 28 pounds.

If a particular load is heavier than you can handle:

- Get someone to help;
- Break it down into smaller loads if possible;
- Use dollies or lifts as aids.

Get Fit!

People who are in poor physical condition are at greater risk for back problems. A conditioning program that includes aerobics, weight training, and stretching exercises will help you prepare your body for the rigors of heavy lifting. If lifting is a regular part of your job, you may also want to consider wearing a back belt for added support.



Dealing with back pain...

[1] Pay attention to any back pain you experience. You can recover from simple sprains and strains with adequate rest.

[2] Stay away from further heavy lifting until a back injury heals. Lifting with an injured back can lead to severe back problems.