

*"For safety's sake—do something."*

## Back Injury Prevention

Injuries to the back can be some of the most prevalent and most difficult to prevent injuries on the job. The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that more than one million employees suffer back injuries each year and back injuries account for one of every five workplace injuries. This type of injury also accounts for a large majority of worker's compensation claims every year.

### Work-related back injuries often occur when:

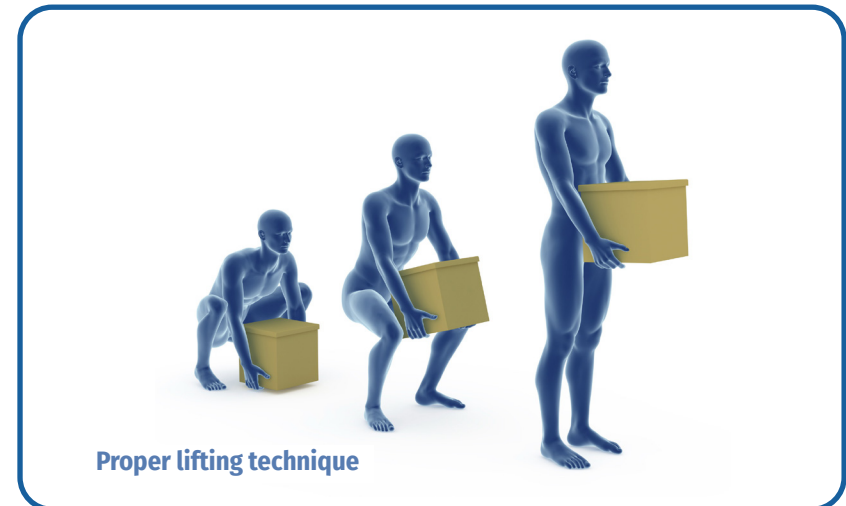
- Poor posture when an employee is lifting up an object.
- Lifting an object above shoulder level.
- Using improper lifting techniques such as lifting with the back and not the legs.
- Lifting an object that is too heavy for the individual.
- Twisting while lifting or carrying objects.
- Repetitive lifting.

### Ways to prevent back injuries using the hierarchy of controls:

*Eliminate* – Eliminate as many lifts as possible during the workday. Utilizing equipment such as dollies, carts, and forklifts is a great way to reduce the amount of lifting employees need to do.

*Engineering Controls* – Create work areas that are ergonomic. Install mechanical lifting devices or conveyor belts where feasible to limit handling objects. Install proper shelving that keeps objects and lifts within an optimal range. This will prevent employees from making an awkward lift such as reaching up too high or being bent over.

*Administrative controls* – Use the buddy system when lifting anything awkward or heavy. Set maximum weight limits that an employee can lift alone. Anything over that weight limit should require a two-person lift or the use of equipment.



### Always utilize proper lifting techniques such as:

- Plan your lift. Make sure nothing is going to be in the route you plan to take that could pose a trip hazard.
- Keep the object close to the body so extra stress is not placed on the spine.
- Ask for help if the object is heavy.
- Know where you are taking the object and where you plan to place it.
- Bend your knees and lift with your legs.
- Keep your back straight and keep a firm grip.

**Safety Scott says,**  
**"Safety always is**  
**ALWAYS!"**