

## The Basics for a Healthy Back

Back injury is best avoided at all costs. Once you have injured your back, it becomes more vulnerable to future injury. A back injury can alter your quality of life and possibly your livelihood, especially if it becomes chronic.

Back injuries are often the result of improper lifting techniques. Follow these basic rules to protect your back when lifting:

- Keep a wide base of support, with your feet shoulder width apart and one foot slightly ahead of the other.
- Squat down, bending at the hips and knees only. If necessary, put one knee to the floor and your other knee in front of you, bent at a right angle.
- Maintain good posture by looking straight ahead, and keeping your back straight, your chest out and your shoulders back.
- Deliberately engage your trunk muscles in order to maintain a safe, straight-back position.
- Slowly lift by straightening your hips and knees, not your back. Do not twist as you lift.
- Hold the load as close to your body as possible at the level of your belly button.
- Use your feet to change direction, taking small steps. Keep your shoulders in line with your hips as you move.
- Set down your load carefully, squatting with the knees and hips only.

***Give your back a break, the right way!***

Source: Healthwise Incorporated. (Updated 02/2006).  
Lifting Properly to Prevent Back Injury: How can I lift without hurting my back? *WebMD*. Retrieved on August 11, 2006, from:  
<[http://www.webmd.com/hw/back\\_pain/tn9304.asp](http://www.webmd.com/hw/back_pain/tn9304.asp)>.



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