



LIFTING THEORIES AND TECHNIQUES

There are numerous lifting theories and techniques, of which the "straight-back, lift-with-your-legs approach", is the most common and most frequently promoted. But after decades of promotion and training this approach to lifting has not been widely accepted by workers, and there is little or no evidence that it has reduced the number or severity of injuries.

In more recent years, numerous other theories and techniques have been promoted, criticized and discarded. There are hip flexing, kinetic-lifting, stooped-posture and pelvic-tilt techniques, among others, which all have both positive and negative considerations. Presently, however, there is no "one-best" lifting method for all lifts, for all people.

Basically, there are seven rules for safe lifting, which have been developed over the years. Some of these are similar to rules of the past; others are new and different. They are presented below:

Lift Comfortably. Choose the position that feels best, with or without a straight back.

Avoid Unnecessary Bending. Do not place objects on the floor if they must be picked up again later.

Avoid Unnecessary Twisting. Turn your feet, not your hips or shoulders. Leave enough room to shift your feet so as not to have to twist.

Avoid Reaching Out. Handle heavy objects close to the body. Avoid a long reach to pick up an object.

Avoid Excessive Weights. If the load is too heavy, get help or use a mechanical device, if possible.

Lift Gradually. Lift slowly, smoothly and without jerking.

Keep in Good Physical Shape. Get proper exercise and maintain a good diet.

THINK BEFORE YOU LIFT

There is one final important rule: "**THINK BEFORE YOU LIFT**". It is better for workers to use their own common sense than to teach them specific lifting, pushing, pulling, walking, climbing or jumping procedures. This is not to imply that unsafe behaviors should not be pointed out to others and corrected. For example, "common sense" may tell certain people to jump down from heights of several feet. Certainly, when people exhibit this type of behavior or when they attempt to carry two hundred pounds, the errors of their behavior should be brought to their attention. Remember, you are the major cause of your injuries; therefore, you have the major responsibility for preventing them.