

Proper Lifting to Protect Your Back

Lifting is something you do every day.

You pick up the newspaper and get the kid's toys off the floor ...

Move a box into the basement ...

Take out the trash ... Move a laundry basket ...

And you probably don't even think about it.

But lifting can cause back problems, or make them worse.

And a bad back can be a big pain that lasts a long time.

So it's good to know the right way to lift. Let's take a look.

First, keep your feet apart.

They should be about the same width as your shoulders.

And keep one foot just a little in front of the other--kind of like a "karate" stance.

Next, squat down, bending at your hips and knees--not at your waist.

If you like, put one knee on the floor.

As you pick up the item, look straight ahead.

Keep your back straight, your chest out, and your shoulders back.

Then slowly lift by straightening your hips and knees.

Hold the load as close to your belly button as you can.

If you need to turn, take small steps. Don't twist.

And if the load seems heavy or awkward, don't raise it above your shoulders.

When you're ready to set it down, do it the same way you picked it up-- squat down, keep the load close to your belly, and don't bend at the waist.

You'll want to do this for everything you pick up, large or small, heavy or light.

By lifting with your knees and hips, you can give your back a break, and keep it healthy.