



# Safe Lifting & Moving Techniques

The 2024 Workers Compensation Board (WCB) PEI Annual Report revealed 56.5% of injuries resulting in time loss claims are the result of sprain, strain and tear injuries also known as musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs). The Report also indicated back injuries as the most common area to be injured totaling 20.9% of all injuries resulting in time loss claims. Help prevent musculoskeletal and back injuries by following the below safe lifting and moving

## Safe Body Mechanics

- Keep your feet/heels flat on the floor
- Position feet shoulder-width apart
- Slightly bend your knees
- Maintain the spine’s natural curves
- Face your task directly
- Tighten your abdominal muscles
- Always lift with your legs, not your back, push up from your heels
- Avoid twisting, move your feet to turn your body
- Keep the load close to the body to minimize strain

## Take Time to Stretch

Before starting any lifting or moving tasks, it’s essential to warm up and stretch. This helps prepare your muscles and joints, reducing the risk of MSIs. A few minutes of gentle movement and stretching can make a big difference in keeping you safe and injury-free. Consider a group stretch session before starting the workday.

## Benefits of Stretching

- **Relieves tension:** Helps ease muscle aches and pain
- **Boosts flexibility:** Keeps muscles strong, flexible, and healthy
- **Improves circulation:** Encourages blood flow and reduces the strain caused by prolonged sitting
- **Stretch smart:** Hold each stretch for 15–30 seconds and move slowly
- **Balance is key:** Always stretch both sides of your body



## Before, During and After Safe Lifting & Moving

Before	During	After
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Warm Up: Loosen up your muscles with light movement and stretching</li><li>▪ Plan the Lift: Know what you’re lifting, where it’s going and how you’ll get it there</li><li>▪ Asses for Hazards: Check for obstacles, uneven surfaces, or anything that could cause injury</li><li>▪ Follow Safe Work Procedures:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ Use lifting equipment or aids whenever possible</li><li>➢ Ensure the right number of people are involved for the task</li><li>➢ Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain the natural curves of your spine: Avoid rounding your back</li><li>▪ Engage your Core: Tighten your abdominal muscles for added support</li><li>▪ Keep the Load Close: Hold items near your body to reduce strain</li><li>▪ Lift with your legs, not your back: Bend at the knees and hips</li><li>▪ Take regular breaks: Avoid fatigue and reduce injury risk</li><li>▪ Stop and reassess if hazards arise: Safety always comes first</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Evaluate the task: Take a moment to assess the load, environment, and your readiness</li><li>▪ Communicate any concerns: Speak up if something doesn’t feel safe or if assistance is needed</li></ul>

Manual materials handling involves moving objects by lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying, holding, or restraining.

# SAFE LIFTING AT WORK

## TIPS FOR WORKERS

- Take rest breaks to relax tired muscles and prevent fatigue from building up.
- Report any discomfort you experience during work.
- Know how to recognize a lifting hazard and report concerns.

## STEPS TO LIFT SAFELY

- 1 Before lifting, check to see if mechanical aids such as hoists, lift trucks, dollies or wheelbarrows are available.
- 2 Plan and prepare for the lift. Protect your feet and hands with sturdy shoes and work gloves. Test the load for weight and stability. Get help with heavy or awkward loads.
- 3 Grasp with both hands. Keep the item stable.
- 4 Slide and/or pull the load toward your stomach, tightening the muscles as you get ready to lift.
- 5 Lift the load as close to your body as possible.
- 6 Stay centered. Hold the load between shoulder and knee height and don't overreach.
- 7 Step or pivot while moving with a load. Don't twist or side bend.
- 8 Try not to bend. If you must, bend your knees to reach or place low-level objects.



## HOW EMPLOYERS CAN DECREASE LIFTING DEMANDS

- Eliminate heaving lifting tasks.
- Plan the work flow. Poor planning of the work flow may result in repeated handling of the same object.
- Decrease the weight of handled objects to acceptable limits.
- Reduce the weight by assigning two people to lift the load or by splitting the load into two or more containers. Use lightweight but sturdy containers to help decrease the weight of the load.
- Change how the load is moved. Lowering objects causes less strain than lifting. Pulling objects is easier than carrying. Pushing is less demanding than pulling.
- Change work area layouts. Reduce the horizontal and vertical distances to lower work demands. Reduce the travel distances as well.
- Pace the work appropriately, especially repetitive handling tasks. More time between tasks reduces the frequency of handling and allows for a rest period.
- Alternate heavy tasks with lighter ones to reduce the build-up of fatigue.



Note that there is no single correct way to perform every lift. Onsite, task-specific training is essential.

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