

## Fact Sheet Safe Lifting Basics

### Preventing Back Injuries

Proper lifting is one of the most important factors in preventing back injuries. Here are some things to do before picking up a load:

- Check the load to see if it is too bulky or heavy
- Use a hand truck or dolly when needed
- Plan a safe, flat walking route. Remove any obstacles in the way if needed
- Do some gentle bends and exercise to warm up. Each muscle should be stretched for about 30 seconds to avoid injury
- Wear proper shoes. Sandals, open toed shoes, or heels are inappropriate. Loose clothing should also be avoided

### Proper Lifting Techniques

Follow the basic principles as shown in the diagram below.

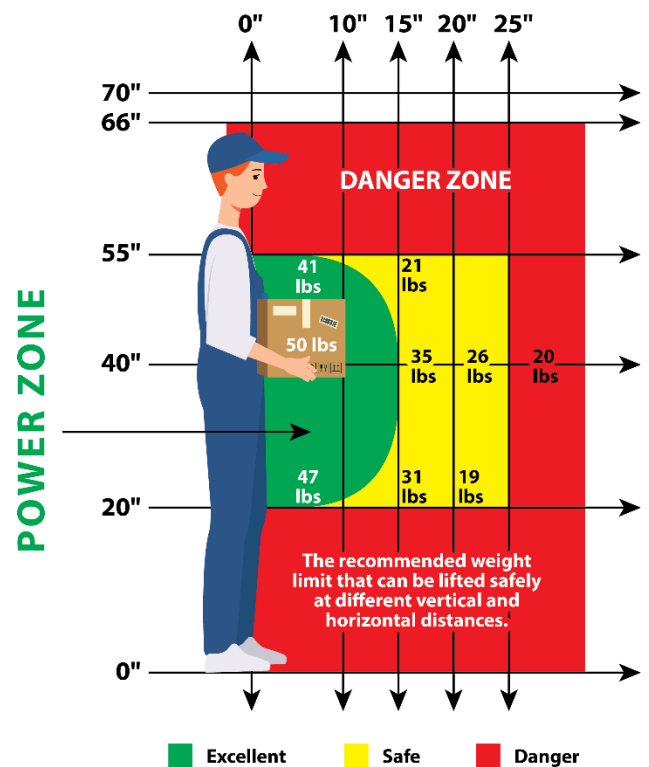


## Proper Carrying

- Wear gloves if needed
- Keep the load close to the body in the 'power zone'
- Keep the back straight
- Lift with your legs
- Do not block your view with the load
- Use an object to steady the load, such as a table
- Ask for help if you need it

## Unloading

- Maintain a good grip and good posture
- Avoid bending at the waist
- Lower the load slowly with bent knees
- If needed, kneel down on one knee for stability
- Place it in a safe area, do not block doorways
- Stand up straight



## Hazards of Poor Lifting Practices

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) account for about 30% of all workplace injuries that result in days away from work (*Bureau of Labor Statistics*). Poor lifting techniques contribute to acute strains and sprains as well as chronic disorders. Injuries can occur to the back, shoulder, neck, calves, and any other part of the body used when lifting. Poor lifting practices contribute to other types of injuries as well such as slips, trips, and falls.

Give your body the time it needs between loads. Take regular breaks and stretch so that your body may recover before picking up another item. These simple strategies can keep you in good shape and reduce the chance of injury.

If you have any questions, contact Environmental Health and Safety at [ehs@csudh.edu](mailto:ehs@csudh.edu).

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