

## PREVENTING BACK INJURIES



When sitting, keep your back in a normal, slightly arched position. Make sure your chair supports your lower back. Keep your head and shoulders erect. Make sure your working surface is at the proper height so you don't have to lean forward.

Once an hour, if possible, stand and stretch. Place your hands on your lower back and gently arch backward.

If you must place an object on a shelf:

- Move as close as possible to the shelf.
- Spread your feet in a wide stance, positioning one foot in front of the other, to give you a solid base of support.
- Do not lean forward and do not fully extend your arms while holding the object in your hands.
- If the shelf is chest high, move close to the shelf and place your feet apart and one foot forward.
- Lift the object chest high, keep your elbows at your side and position your hands so you can push the object up and on to the shelf.
- Remember to tighten your stomach muscles before lifting.



## SAFE LIFTING

Plan ahead and don't be in a hurry.

Wrong way to lift

Right way to lift



- Position yourself close to the object you want to lift. Separate your feet shoulder-width apart to give yourself a solid base of support.
  - Bend at the knees. Tighten your stomach muscles. Lift with your leg muscles as you stand up.
  - Don't try to lift by yourself an object that is too heavy or an awkward shape. Get help.
- To lift a very light object from the floor, such as a piece of paper, lean over the object, slightly bend one knee and extend the other leg behind you. Hold on to a nearby chair or table for support as you reach down to the object.



Whether you're lifting a heavy laundry basket or a heavy box, remember to get close to the object, bend at the knees and lift with your leg muscles. Do not bend at your waist. When lifting luggage, stand along side of the luggage, bend at your knees, grasp the handle and straighten up.

While you are holding the object, keep your knees slightly bent to maintain your balance. If you have to move the object to one side, avoid twisting your body. Point your toes in the direction you want to move and pivot in that direction. Keep the object close to you when moving.

## HOW TO PREVENT BACK PAIN

- Use the correct lifting and moving techniques.
- Exercise regularly to keep the muscles that support your back strong and flexible.
- Don't slouch; poor posture puts a strain on your lower back.
- Maintain your proper body weight to avoid straining your back muscles.
- Keep a positive attitude about your job and home life; studies show that persons who are unhappy at work or home tend to have more back problems and take longer to recover than persons who have a positive attitude.