

Safe Lifting Tips!

1. **Have a plan** – Don't wait until you have picked up an item before deciding what to do with it. Know where it is going before you pick it up so you can go right there
 - a. Plan your route, take note of any potential obstacles
 - b. Observe the floor, make sure you have a good foothold
2. **Test the load** – Know what you are getting into. Is it heavy? Is the weight evenly distributed? Can I get a good grip on it?
3. **Face the object** – Don't pick things up from the side. Face the object before you pick it up. The spinal discs are out of alignment and can be damaged if you are twisting to pick something up.
4. **Lift (and place) with your legs, not your back** – It is more natural, and easier, for us to bend at the waist to pick up an object. The problem is, this puts not only the weight of the object, but also your entire body onto your lower back which can cause problems. By using your legs, your thighs will burn a little more, but your back will be protected. Start with one knee on the floor.
5. **Avoid lifting above your shoulders** – Ideally, you want to keep the load by your waist. Keep it close to your body which will help reduce the pressure on your back. Use a step stool if needed.
6. **Turn your body, not your torso** – As before, do not twist, instead turn your whole body to keep the pressure even on your spine and spinal discs.
 - a. Keep your back straight
7. **ASK FOR HELP!** There is no shame in getting assistance to lift something. Know your limits and don't overdo it.
 - a. Reduce the weight if you can
8. **For those of you who work with children**, there is an added layer to this. Children should only be picked up if they are asking to be

picked up or if they are headed into danger. They especially should not be picked up if they are agitated. Same rules apply if you are picking up a child, bend your legs, do not bend at the waist. Children can be squirmy and difficult to manage when lifting so be prepared for varied weight distributions.