# Student worksheet - Manual handling

## Key messages

Manual handling is any activity where you use force to lift, lower, push, pull, hold or restrain something.

* Putting boxes on shelves, painting, gardening, cleaning, writing and typing are some examples of manual handling tasks
* Most manual handling injuries can be prevented through training and supervision and by following safe work procedures
* Even though you may be young and new to the job, you have a responsibility to speak up
* Talk to your supervisor if you feel your job is too difficult, too tiring or puts you at risk of injury

**Manual handling injuries include:**

* Strains and sprains
* Neck and back injuries
* Slips, falls and crush incidents
* Cuts, bruises and broken bones
* Occupational overuse syndrome (OOS)

**Ways to reduce the risk:**

* Lighten loads (break loads into smaller quantities)
* Reduce bending, twisting, reaching movements
* Use team lifting
* Use mechanical assistance (e.g. trollies and adjustable height workbenches and seating)
* Prevent muscle strain and fatigue. This includes warming up before working, taking rest breaks, and allowing time to get used to a new task
* Bend your knees and not your back
* Know your limits

Remember to assess the lift, considering the weight, shape and size of the object, BEFORE you attempt to lift.

Get help if you think there may be a problem.

Discuss possible solutions to lifting

* Team lifting
* Lifts using trollies, pallets, conveyors
* Bending your knees

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| Safe manual handling | | |
| **Manual handing activity** | **Do not** | **Do this** |
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## Activity 1: Planning the lift

Read the following lifting procedures and then practice by lifting a box from a desk or table and then placing it on the ground. Then practice lifting the box from the ground and placing it back on the desk or table.

**Lifting procedures**

1. Size up the lift. Test it for weight. If the load is too heavy or awkward – get help.
2. Place your feet correctly. For good balance – feet apart, one foot beside the load and one slightly behind it.
3. Bend your knees – keep a straight back.
4. Grip the load firmly with both hands – keep load close to body.
5. Raise your head and pull your chin in to keep your back straight. Tighten your stomach muscles.
6. Lift the load to waist level by straightening your legs. Keep elbows close to your body.
7. Do not twist whilst handling load. Turn by moving your feet.
8. To put down the load, use the same principles – straight back, bend the knees.

## Activity 2 - Practicing safe handling

What does manual handling look like?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Manual Handling activities | | |
| Examples |  | Try some of these things with your class using the safe lifting procedure above. |
| Lifting |  |  |
| Pushing |  |  |
| Pulling |  |  |
| Lowering |  |  |
| Carrying |  |  |
| Holding |  |  |
| Sitting at a desk |  |  |