Tips for manual handling

Top tips for improving the safety with manual handling

- Reduce or eliminate manual handling tasks. Only manual handle if necessary and use appropriate equipment.
- Ensure procedure appropriate for environment and load.
- Assess load and environment <u>before</u> manual handling.
- Wear appropriate footwear and necessary safety gear.
- Ask for assistance if required. Know your capabilities.
- If lifting with a partner – communicate. E.g. "Ready, Steady, Lift".
- Change posture frequently. If you are doing repetitive or prolonged tasks, ensure you use good pacing practices.
- Apply safe biomechanical principles. See overleaf to learn more.

x Incorrect technique

✔ Correct technique

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Safe Biomechanical Principles

Applying safe biomechanical principles to manual handling tasks minimises the strain on your spine and limbs. These principles include:

1 Stand in a stable position. Your feet should be shoulder distance apart. You may need to move your feet to maintain a stable posture.

2 Maintain a neutral 'S' shaped spine posture. Minimise forward bending of your trunk. Have heavier items on a shelf between hip and elbow height, rather than down low or up high.

3 Work in mid positions. Avoid end of range postures, especially sustained.

4 Use the Semi-squat technique. To bend down; push bottom backwards, fold at the hips and bend at the knees.

5 Move feet to turn. Minimise side bending and twisting of your spine by making sure your shoulders and pelvis stay in line with each other. If you need to turn, move your feet as well as your trunk.

6 Keep object close to your body. Keep your elbows tucked in. The further away from your body the load is, the greater the potential for injury.

7 Tighten abdominal muscles (gently pull in lower tummy) before manual handling to support and protect your spine.

8 Keep your head raised, with your chin tucked in during the movement.

9 Move smoothly throughout the technique – avoid jerky or sudden forceful movements.

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