

### Good Body Mechanics

Most people are aware that when they bend or lift something, they should bend their knees. While it is important to bend your knees, attention must also be paid to the position of your spine. In order to avoid injury, either at the moment of lifting something or, more likely, as a result of poor body mechanics over time, care must be taken to maintain the previously described "neutral spine." Again, a neutral spine means that the three normal curves-at the neck, middle and lower back-are maintained. When viewed from the outside, the back looks straight with a hollow in the low back.

- 1.) Test the weight of the load first and get help if it is heavy or bulky.
- 2.) Get close to the load
- 3.) Move the feet apart, one foot ahead of the other, toes pointed outward.
- 4.) Perform the waiter's bow plus squat.



Figure 4: Top: Incorrect lifting technique  
Bottom: Proper lifting technique

- 5.) Pick up the load and bring it in close to you.
- 6.) Lift by using your legs and buttocks to push up to straight.
- 7.) If turning, don't twist. Turn your feet by taking small steps.
- 8.) If carrying is necessary, keep the stomach muscles tight and maintain a neutral spine.

9.) To lower the load, again perform the "waiter's bow" plus squat, sticking the buttocks out behind you as you go down.

**Other hints:**

- It is easiest to load and unload things at waist height.

- Lifting is easiest from knuckles to shoulder range.

- With overhead reaching, use a stool or chair to bring yourself up to the level of the object; again, get as close as possible.

- Regarding pushing or pulling, PUSH! Don't pull. The same body mechanics hold for pushing as bending and lifting neutral spine.