Make your safety and the safety of others a top priority.

To keep the workplace safe:

- Taking all training seriously and making use of what you know.
- Telling your employer about any medical conditions that could affect your ability to handle loads (for example, pregnancy, illness or injury).
- Reporting any hazards or possible hazards to your supervisor or manager immediately.

Your Responsibilities:

- Assessing loads to decide whether mechanical or other aids will be needed to lift the load more safely.
- Supervising manual handling and making sure it is done properly.
- Giving information, instructions and training on safe systems of work.

Your Employers' Responsibilities:

- Including the following:
  - Taking the workplace safe into account.
  - Supervising manual handling and making sure it is done properly.
  - Giving information, instructions and training on safe systems of work.

A Short Guide to Correct Procedures For Manual Handling

Lifting and Moving at Work

It's a Team Effort
The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 state that Manual Handling is the transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling carrying or moving) by hand or bodily force.

To reduce the risk of injury and accidents you need to learn the correct way of lifting and moving things. Some of the more common injuries sustained from manual handling are:

**Strains and sprains**
- Lifting too much or beyond your capability can cause this type of injury.

**Fractures**
- Bones can be fractured if you drop heavy items onto limbs.

**Cuts and abrasions**
- Handling sharp or rough objects can cause cuts and abrasions.

Other types of injury can be caused by falling while carrying a load. Hernias, which are tearing of the stomach muscles, are caused by straining to lift very heavy objects.

The Team Lift

When a load is heavy, bulky or unwieldy, it may be prudent to enlist the help of a second person. However, this will bring its own problems that will have to be dealt with.

It will be beneficial to work with someone who is about the same build and height as you are, so that the load is shared equally.

Lift with the legs, keep the shoulders level and follow the correct lifting procedure.

Always choose a lead person to supervise the lift and give instructions. Both persons should carry out the correct lifting procedure at the same time until the load is at the correct level. Don’t jerk the load when team lifting, lift smoothly and evenly so as not to cause the other person to drop the load.

One Arm Loads

Lifting loads on one side of the body are not a particularly good idea. However, if they cannot be avoided the following points will help minimise the risk of injury.

Brace your body with the opposite arm, if possible, as this will help steady and support your body in a more upright position.

When reaching for the load, bend your knees and waist and keep your back upright.

Grip the load firmly (by a handle if possible). Also if possible, bring the load to the front of the body and support the load with the other hand, bringing the load close to the body to improve the centre of gravity.
The Lifting Procedure

Direction
The general stance should be in the direction in which the load is to be moved. This avoids twisting the spine or being off balance with the load.

Feet
The feed should be hip width apart, with one foot slightly in front of the other, as close to the centre of gravity as possible. So that once the load has been lifted, the weight may be transferred on to the other foot.

Grip
A proper grip makes maximum use of the palm of the hands and fingers hooked under the load. An improper grip can result in the load being dropped or injury to the hands and fingers.

The Back
The back should be kept natural curve to maintain it in its natural and strongest position. The load should then be raised using the leg and thigh muscles.

The Head
The head should be kept as close to the body as possible this helps to retain balance.

The Body
The body should be used to counter balance the weight of the load.

Always make sure you have
Enough space to work in

The Law and Manual Handling

Manual Handling is covered by a number of pieces of legislation. Primarily the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 puts specific duties on employers and employees. Underlying this is the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, which in its simplest form says that employers are to:-

1. Avoid manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable
2. Assess any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided
3. Reduce the risk of injury so far as is reasonably practicable.

Right or Wrong
One of the easiest ways to cause yourself injury is to carry out a manual handling task incorrectly. To protect yourself, it is wise to follow the advice below.

Training
Take manual handling training seriously. It is important to help you move and lift objects properly. Put into practice what you learn, it could save you a lot of pain and suffering.

Safe Systems at Work
Safe systems of work are in place to make sure that the task is safe for you to do. The rules are there to protect you, so follow all safety advice and guidance at all times.

Are you fit for the task?
If you have a condition such as illness, pregnancy or injury that may prevent you from carrying out a manual handling task, you must tell your supervisor or manager.
Principles of Manual Handling

The human body consists of a frame, built around the spine and operated by the abdominal and back muscles. When used in its intended way (in an upright position) the spine is comparatively secure and stable. However, when bent the spine becomes weak and vulnerable to injury and severe damage. Because the spine also enclosed the central nervous system, damage caused in this area is often crippling and can be permanent.

The correct method of lifting and handling loads recognises the weaknesses of the body and the strength of the leg and thighs. The procedure is designed to use the body more as an elevator rather than a crane. To do this the power for the lift is generated by the thighs and legs and not the spine. Not only does this protect the back from damage, it also enables heavier loads to be moved.

REMEMBER
You and your manager/supervisor are both responsible for preventing accidents. Always check if you are not sure about a situation. A good source of information are the Risk Assessments which will be supplied by your manager/supervisor. Make sure you have read them and know what hazards and risks are from a particular task.

Getting it Right

During our lifetime we learn bad habits where lifting is concerned. It takes a conscious effort to remember to lift and carry items correctly. Follow the basic tips below to help prevent accidents and injuries to yourself and others.

Examine the Object
Check the item to be lifted to see if it is stable and balanced. Remember that different objects can have different centres of gravity making them unstable. Look for any sharp edges or things that stick out that could hurt you. Is there a better way to move the item such as a sack truck.

Plan the Job
Check the safe system of work. Make sure that the route is clear and free from hazards that could trip you. Identify where you want to put the load and make sure it is clear. Identify rest stops if you need to carry the item over a distance greater than 10 meters.

Getting a good grip
Decide how you are going to grip the load. The object may have handles, if so, are they strong enough to carry the weight. Use the correct type of gloves. The wrong type or the incorrect fit can be a cause of dropping an item that is being carried.

Get Help
Always use any mechanical aid that has been provided for you and get help from a second person if you have any doubts about your ability to lift the object.

Think about your safety
all of the time!!!