

# PLAYING IT **SAFE**

Be safe and healthy on the job with these helpful tips provided by  
**Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd.**

## Reduce Your Risk of Back Injuries

*Helpful tips for lifting properly at the site*

Construction tasks require constantly working around heavy objects, machinery and many other situations that can cause serious injury. And lower back injuries caused by lifting heavy objects are one of the most common work-related injuries in the construction industry. Follow these simple guidelines to ensure that you're lifting properly.

### Proper Lifting Techniques

- Wear gloves if you are lifting rough equipment.
- Clear away any potential obstacles before beginning to carry an object.
- Get a good grip and good footing. Use your hands, not your fingers, to grip the load, and position your feet so that one foot is next to the load and one is behind it.
- Get under the load by bending your knees, not your back. This is the most important lifting technique to remember, as bending over at the waist to reach for the object puts strain on your back, shoulder and neck muscles, and can cause serious injury.
- Keep the load close to your body.
- Never twist your body when you are lifting. Turn your entire body by using your feet.
- Do not lift above the shoulders or below waist level.

### Size up the Load

Before lifting an object, check its weight. Decide if you can handle it alone or if you need assistance. When in doubt, ask for help. Moving an object that is too heavy or bulky can cause severe injury. As a general rule, most men should not lift more than 17 kilos, and most women should not lift more than 13 kilos. If a particular load is heavier than you can handle:

- Get someone to help.
- Break it down into smaller loads if possible.
- Use lifts or other equipment as aids. These tools were made for heavy lifting.

### Lifting as a Team

When others are helping you lift, teamwork is very important. If you're going to be carrying the load to another point, both of you should coordinate this prior to lifting the object. Check the route and clearance. One worker needs to be in a position to observe and direct the other. Lifting and lowering should be done in unison. Don't let the load drop suddenly without warning your partner.

### Get Fit!

People who are in poor physical condition are at greater risk for back problems. A conditioning programme that includes aerobics, weight training and stretching exercises will help you prepare your body for the rigours of lifting. If lifting is a regular part of your job, you may also want to consider wearing a back belt for added support.



### Listen to Your Body

If you start to experience any back pain from a specific task, listen to your body. Ignoring even minor back pain can lead to more serious injuries. Ask your supervisor if you can trade duties with another worker until the pain subsides.

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