

# PLAYING IT **SAFE**

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

## **Eliminate Back Pain**

### *Use proper lifting techniques*

Lifting is such a common activity that it is often forgotten that there is a right way to do it. In fact, lower back injuries are the most common work-related injury and can cause a lifetime of pain. Following these simple guidelines and learning to lift properly today will help you to avoid back pain tomorrow.

#### **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 kg, and most women should not lift more than 13 kg. If a particular load is heavier than you can handle:

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

#### **Team Lifting**

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.



#### **Dealing with Back Pain**

Pay attention to any back pain you experience. You can recover from simple sprains and strains with adequate rest if you stay away from further heavy lifting until your injury heals. Lifting with an injured back can lead to severe back problems.

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