



WELLPATH'S HEALTHY BACK PROGRAM



Lifting Lab Form: Use page 2 of this form to do a self-assessment of your lifting technique.

As we have emphasized in the Healthy Back Challenge (HBC), back pain happens to almost everyone and it is a threat to our livelihood and quality of life. So it makes sense to assess our threats and take these easy steps to avoid back injury. Lifting is a high risk activity and there is much we can do to make it as safe as possible.

Before You Lift

PLAN AHEAD

- Know what you are lifting and how you will lift it.
- Be aware of the weight of the object.
- Determine whether or not it's safe to lift on your own.
- Make sure the work area is flat, dry and clear of debris.

CHECK YOUR PATHWAY

- Make sure the lift pathway is clear.
- Remove any tripping hazards or debris.
- Check for any wet or slick surfaces.

USE ERGONOMIC EQUIPMENT

- Use lift assists, forklift, dolly, cart, hand truck or hoist.
- Make sure you are trained before using the equipment.

GET HELP WHEN NEEDED

- When lifting awkward or heavy loads, utilize a two person lift.
- Make sure you lift at the same time and keep the load level.

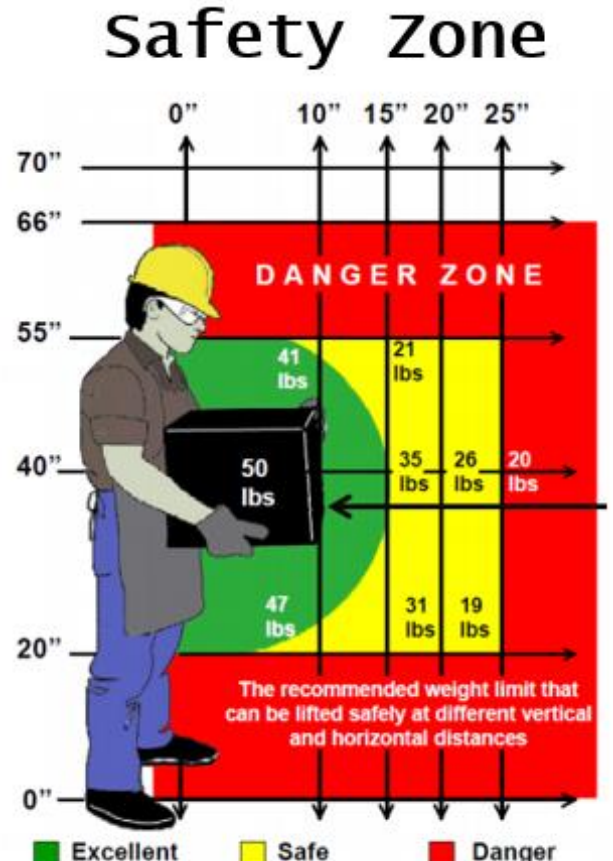
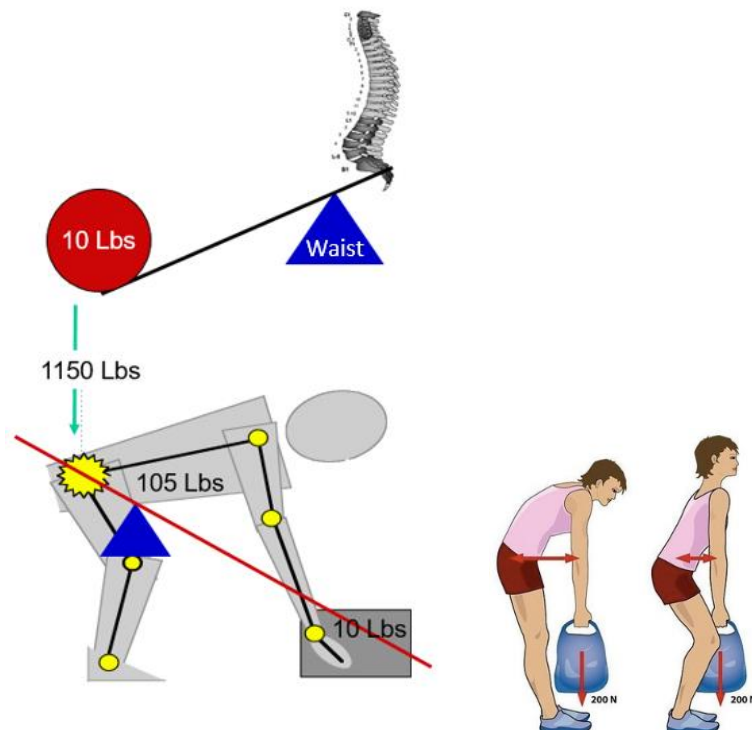
WEAR PROPER PPE

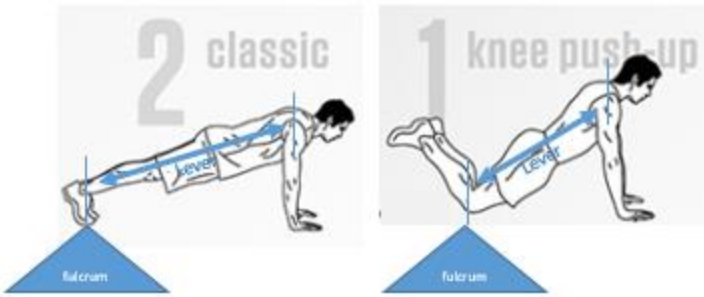
- Wear proper required protective shoes and gloves.

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The most important factor in safety is being aware. It is so easy to lift without thinking. But once the injury happens, it's too late. Think about light lifting which you will sustain for a long time or with which you will be traveling. Think about shoes and surfaces and the other factors outlined in the lifting lab. Think before lifting.

Remember when lifting to keep your levers short. This means keep a bend in your knees (shortening the lever that is your legs) and keep your head up and bend at your waist so that your back is shorter. If you lift with straight legs and you bend at the waist so that your back is perpendicular to the ground, you increase the stress on your lower back by 10 times. So a simple 10 lbs. object, when lifted with poor technique can place almost 1,200 pounds of pressure on the lower back.





Try this simple demonstration of the effect of shortening levers in lifting. Assume position 2, the classic push-up. Note the weight on your shoulders and hands. Move to position 1, with your knees down, which shortens the lever by moving the fulcrum. Notice the reduction of load on your shoulders and hands. If it is safe for you to do push-ups, do so in each posture to demonstrate the difference in load.

Lifting Technique Self-Assessment:

Now, as you will be demonstrating your lifting technique to your partner for this self-assessment, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Have I warmed up?
2. Am I wearing appropriate shoes?
3. Do I have any back pain currently?
4. Have I caused back pain the past by lifting?
5. Review the checklist from Ergo-plus “Before You Lift” on page one.

Choose an empty box, laundry basket or something very light to lift. Demonstrate lifting technique on a variety of objects. Have one or two partners evaluate your lifting techniques using the following criteria and place a Y or N in the blank. Alternatively, you can place a number 1-10 for the quality of the movement, 1= low and 10= high:

- _____ Was lifter as close to the object as possible?
- _____ Did lifter use an appropriately wide stance (hip to shoulder length apart)?
- _____ Did lifter use a staggered stance with one foot forward of the other and to the side of the object?
- _____ Did lifter keep back straight throughout the lifting movement?
- _____ Did lifter lower by bending knees and hips, keeping head high?
- _____ When possible did the lifter place their hands diagonal, on opposite corners of the box/object?
- _____ Did lifter tighten core muscles prior to lifting (may have to ask lifter)?
- _____ Did the lifter keep the load close to their body in the safety zone see picture?
- _____ Did lifter avoid twisting and maintain body alignment while traveling?
- _____ Did lifter use the above principles when placing down the load?
- _____ Did lifter maintain near-normal breathing patterns?
- _____ Was lifter’s power coming from legs and not back or arms?
- _____ Did lifter avoid obstruction of view when carrying?

Review the items from the assessment that can be improved upon performance. Practice lifting and demonstrating proper form such that you earn a “Yes” or “10” (perfect rating) on each item of the assessment.