

## Safe Lifting

According to OSHA, back injuries are number one among work place injuries. One in every five on-the-job injuries involves the back, but back injuries can and do happen at home as well.

As if being extremely painful is not enough, back injuries can lead to permanent disability, loss of work, compensation claims and expensive medical bills.

So how can we take care of our back and avoid injury?

Poor posture or being overweight can potentially weaken the back.

- Exercise regularly to maintain fitness and strength.
- Keep your back straight to avoid stress on the spinal column.

Most important, follow the rules for safe lifting. Most of us have heard them over and over again, but how often do we really think about it when lifting?

- 1) **Stretch prior to lifting** to loosen muscles.
- 2) **Size up the load.** Test it to see if you can lift it safely. Get a solid grip and maintain your balance.
- 3) **Get close** to the load before lifting and keep the weight close to your body.
- 4) **Make sure your footing is secure.**
- 5) **Lift with your legs.** Bend your knees and keep your back straight. Lift smoothly and slowly
- 6) **Never twist while lifting!** Move your feet so that they point in the direction of the lift as you turn.
- 7) **Watch for obstacles.** Make sure you have a clear path.
- 8) **Drop the load the same way you picked it up.** Knees bent, back straight.
- 9) **ASK FOR HELP!** Never attempt to move extremely heavy or awkward objects alone.