

## LIFTING SAFELY TO PREVENT BACK INJURIES PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUES

It is estimated that **8 out of 10** Americans will have a back injury sometime during their lives. Preventing a back injury can be as simple as learning proper lifting and material handling techniques, eliminating excess body weight, strengthening neglected back muscles, and adopting good posture habits, with your three natural back curves in their normal position at work, home and play.

### BACK FACTS:

- The personal pain and inconvenience caused by back problems cannot be measured. It can be calculated in dollars and cents:
- Prevention is the best insurance!
- You are the key.
- **Step 1:** Keep your back in mind
- **Step 2:** Think ahead, mentally lift the load first
- **Step 3:** Get help, if the load is too bulky

Back injuries cost employers an estimated **\$6.5 billion a year!**

**Don't** jerk as you lift; too sudden a motion can injure your back.

**Don't** turn without moving your feet — you'll twist your back.

**Don't** reach — move closer to the load or move the load closer to you.

### BACK SAFETY – STACKING HEIGHTS

Safest stacking practices place objects between knee and shoulder height. Below knee height, places stress on the low back. Above shoulder height, places stress on the shoulders and upper back.



Here are a few things to consider first:

**Get items OFF floor level.** Raise the bottom by placing a sturdy carton or wood platform under the bottom item. This helps to eliminate lifts from ground level.

**On shelves, place the heavier items at *waist* height.** This is an easier lift for the back.

**Keep the height of the stack below shoulder height** if possible. If the stack is above shoulder height, use a stepstool properly.

### TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE AND HEALTHY!

- Aerobic exercise - walk, swim or bike 3 to 5 times a week.
- Stretching - slow stretches, hold for 10 seconds and don't bounce during stretching.
- Strengthening - Lift weights 2 to 3 times a week.

### QUESTIONS? ASK ME, YOUR SAFETY PROFESSIONAL!

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*Please remember that the goal of Keenan's loss control services is to (i) promote safety awareness, (ii) assist in identification of conditions that may pose a risk of injury and/or property damage, and (iii) provide recommendations and/or suggestions to help mitigate the risks identified. While we are confident that the conclusions and suggestions contained in this newsletter will assist the district to create a safer environment, we do not suggest that following our recommendations will eliminate all risk of injury or that it will result in improved loss experience.*