

MANUAL HANDLING

Reducing the Risk of Injury

WEB VERSION

Section 1- Legal Requirements

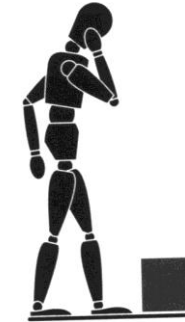
The University is required under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations to:

- Identify those situations where manual handling is required
- If possible avoid the need for manual handling where there is a risk of injury
- Assess the risk when alternatives are not possible*
- In assessing the risks always consider:
 - Task
 - Individual Capacity
 - Load
 - Environment
- Devise safe systems of work to minimise the likelihood of injury
- Provide and maintain appropriate lifting and carrying equipment
- Where appropriate provide personal protective equipment, such as gloves with a good grip and safety shoes
- Train employees in safe handling of loads
- Assess the weights of loads and inform employees
- Manage and keep records of the assessments and safe working systems

* See University website for Manual Handling Risk Assessment Forms

Section 2 - Good Lifting Technique

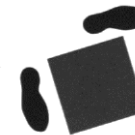
There is no doubt that correct lifting technique is important. The instructions below should be followed to ensure that you reduce the level of risk in lifting.



1. Think before lifting or handling. Plan the lift. Can handling aids be used? Will help be needed with the load? Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials. For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.

2. Don't lift or handle more than you can easily manage. There is a difference between what you can lift and what you can lift safely. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.

3. Keep the load close to the waist. Keep the load close to the body for as long as possible while lifting. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.



4. Adopt a stable position. Place your feet apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load, if it is on the ground). Be prepared to move your feet during the lift to maintain stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, which may make this difficult.

5. Get a good hold. Where possible the load should be hugged as close as possible to the body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only.



6. Start in a good Posture. At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).

7. Don't flex the back any further while Lifting. This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.



8. Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways. Especially while the back is bent. Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

9. Keep the head up when handling. Look ahead, not down at the load, once you are holding it securely.

10. Move smoothly. Do not jerk or snatch the load as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.



11. Put it down, then Adjust. If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position.

12. Team Lifting and Handling.

Good communication is essential when lifting as part of a team, e.g. one operative takes the lead and counts 'one, two, three' prior to the lift. The lead person should look to see if the team have control of the load, that it is lifted smoothly and that all members lift together.

13. Slopes. When negotiating a slope or ramp, assistance should be sought as this can make it hard to control the load, increasing the risk of injury.

14. Handling Devices. These should be suitable for the task and have handle heights between shoulders and waist. All devices should be properly maintained and employees should have been trained in how to use them.

Section 3 - Stay Active

About 80% of us will get back pain in our lifetime. It is important to carry on with normal activities and make sure you stay active — walk, take the stairs, cycle or swim.

Contact information:

If you have a musculoskeletal problem associated with work, contact:

Occupational Health
16 Mill Lane
Cambridge
CB2 1SB
01223 336594

For further information contact:

Safety Office
16 Mill Lane
Cambridge
CB2 1SB
01223 333301

For free leaflets and further information on Manual Handling see HSE website:

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/manlinde.htm

HSE Manual handling Assessment Chart
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg383.pdf>

HSE Musculoskeletal Disorders website:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm>

Safety Office
16 Mill Lane
Cambridge CB2 1SB
Phone: 01223 333301
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Email: safety@admin.cam.ac.uk
www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/safety