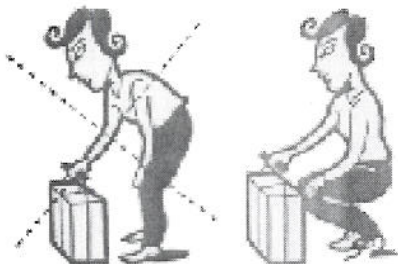


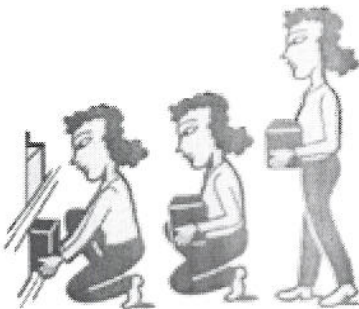
Materials Handling Ergonomics

How to Save Your Back

- **Always try to maintain the natural curves in your back.**
- These curves provide strength and support for your back. This is especially important when lifting or when sitting for long periods
- **Hinge at your hips and bend your knees when lifting.**
- You should be doing most of the work with your legs rather than with your back! Placing your feet shoulder-width apart will help you stay balanced. A wider stance can also help if you have difficulty bending your knees.



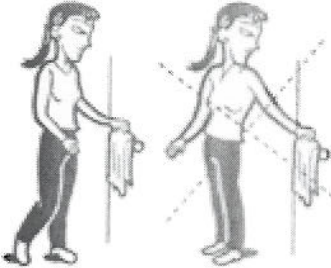
- **Tighten your stomach muscles before you lift.**
- They help support and stabilize your back when you lift.
- **Plan ahead before lifting. Test the weight first.**
- Many injuries result from poor planning and overexertion.
- **Keep objects close.**
- A 10 pound bag of groceries can put 100 pounds of pressure on your lower back. Holding things away from your body greatly increases this pressure.



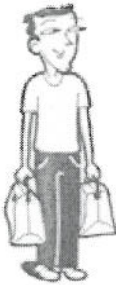
- **When possible, use your hand and arm for added support when bending and lifting.**
- Use a golfer's lift to retrieve light objects, or when reaching into low containers like a hamper or shopping cart.



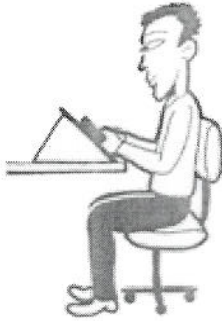
- **Pivot with your feet when lifting and moving objects.**
- Turn your whole body instead of twisting your spine - especially if you are holding something heavy. Your nose should always be in-line with your toes.



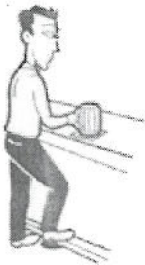
- **Balance objects when you carry them.**
- Use dollies and carts for heavy items whenever you can. Use your body weight to push the dolly or cart with your legs, rather than pulling with your back.



- **When sitting, sit all the way back in the chair seat against the backrest.**
- Let the chair do some of the work for you - no slumping allowed!!!
- **Get as comfortable as you can in the car.**
- Long commutes can be hard on your back. Adjust your seat and position your arms so that you can easily reach the steering wheel. Use a pillow in the seat if needed to support your lower back curve. Remember to stop to take stretch breaks when on a long trip.
- **Use a bookstand or a copyholder to elevate reading materials.**
- Looking down puts a tremendous strain on the neck and upper back.



- **Change positions frequently when sitting or standing for prolonged periods.**
- When standing, use a footstool to prop one foot up, and switch sides every so often. When at a sink or counter, see if you can open one of the cabinets and put one foot on the bottom shelf



- **Back injuries can result from use of bad postures and poor movement patterns.**
- Always use good mechanics when lifting either a heavy box or a light newspaper.
- **Stay in good shape.**
- Exercise. Do daily stretches and watch your weight. Extra weight, muscle weakness, or muscle imbalances due to tightness, can affect your posture and result in back discomfort or pain.

More information and this FACT SHEET can be found on the UCLA ergonomics' website.

<http://ergonomics.ucla.edu/index.html>