

# The Facts

## On Proper Lifting



# OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

Lifting heavy items is one of the leading causes of injury in the workplace. Heavy loads place great stress on muscles, discs, and vertebrae. Back injuries cause unnecessary discomfort and pain, which can impact an employee's lifestyle and ability to work. When possible, you should always use a lifting device such as a forklift, dolly, cart, or hoist. Always make sure you are wearing shoes that allow for good footing and will not increase your chances of tripping.

### Before Lifting

- Determine whether you can use a lifting device to eliminate manual lifting.
- **Warm Up** - stretch your lower back and hamstrings.
- Be aware of the weight of the object you are lifting, if the item is too heavy or bulky use a lifting device or ask for help from a coworker.
- Check your pathway – make sure it is dry and clear of debris.
- Remove any tripping hazards in your pathway.

### OSHA Weight Limit

Based off the NIOSH Lifting Equation, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends the weight limit for individual lifting be **50 pounds**. When lifting more than 50 pounds, it is recommended to use a lifting device or two or more people.

### Lifting Do's

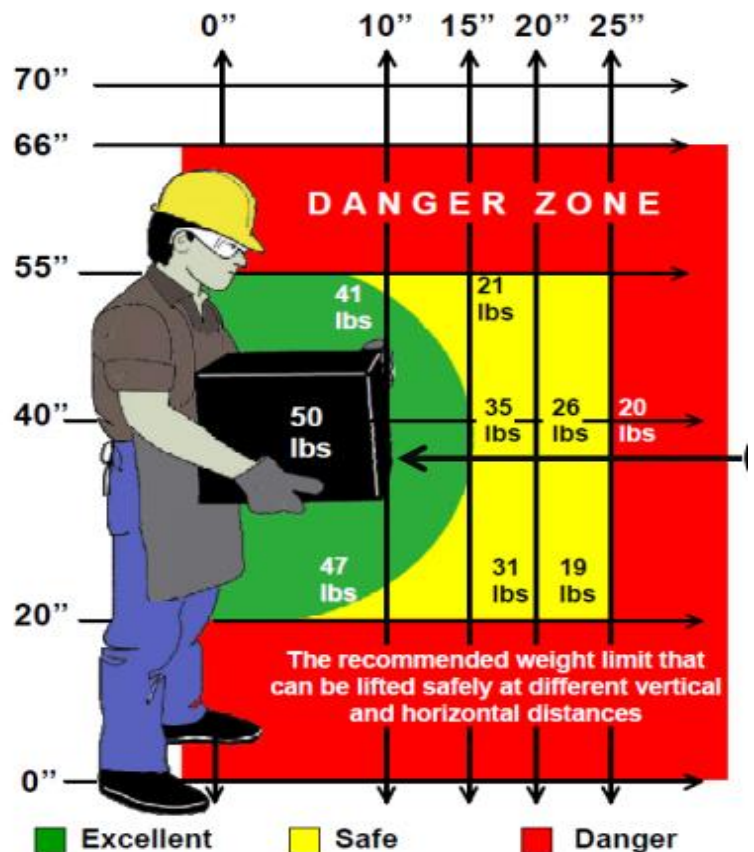
- Use a lifting device if possible.
- Keep the object as close to your body as possible.
- Keep your back in a straight, neutral position.
- Lift with your legs, NOT your back.
- Use a wide stance for balance.
- Pivot with your feet to avoid twisting.
- Get help with awkward, bulky loads.



The figure above demonstrates proper lifting technique. The person keeps their back straight and neutral while lifting with their legs.

### Lifting Don'ts

- Don't hold your breath while lifting.
- Don't bend or twist at the waist.
- Don't use a partial grip (1-2 fingers).
- Don't obstruct your vision while carrying.
- Don't jerk or lift quickly.



The figure above shows the different zones when lifting an object. As your reach increases, the recommended weight limit decreases. This is because as we move the object further from our body, we have less control.

For more information on Ergonomics, visit the following link [Ergonomics | Clemson University, South Carolina](#)