Lifting the right way

Bending. Turning. Stretching. Twisting. There’s no denying that our backs do a lot of work, and that all the wear and tear can lead to injury. But there are some easy ways to help protect your back. Here are some tips you can try:

Before you pick up a light or heavy load

• Take a moment and think about it
• Plan in your mind for the best way to lift what’s in front of you. This could include getting help from one or more people
• Try to lift and move slowly and carefully

How to lift without hurting your back

These tips will help you avoid straining your lower back:

• Keep a wide base of support. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart, with one foot slightly ahead of the other (karate stance).
• Squat down, bending at the hips and knees only. If needed, put one knee to the floor and your other knee in front of you, bent at a right angle (half kneeling).
• Keep a good posture. Look straight ahead, and keep your back straight, your chest out, and your shoulders back.
• Slowly lift by straightening your hips and knees (not your back). Keep your back straight, and don’t twist as you lift.
• Hold the load as close to your body as possible, at the level of your belly button.
• Set down your load carefully, squatting with the knees and hips only.

It takes very little time to lift things the right way. But it can take days, weeks, or months to heal from a back injury.

See the other side for three important keys to healthy lifting!
Three keys to healthy lifting

Want a quick list for proper lifting?
Here are three keys that can help keep you safe

1. Do not attempt to lift by bending forward. Bend your hips and knees to squat down to your load.

2. Never lift a heavy object above shoulder level.

3. Avoid turning or twisting your body while lifting or holding a heavy object. Use your feet to turn.