OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY · MANUAL HANDLING

VITS

Lifting heavy loads

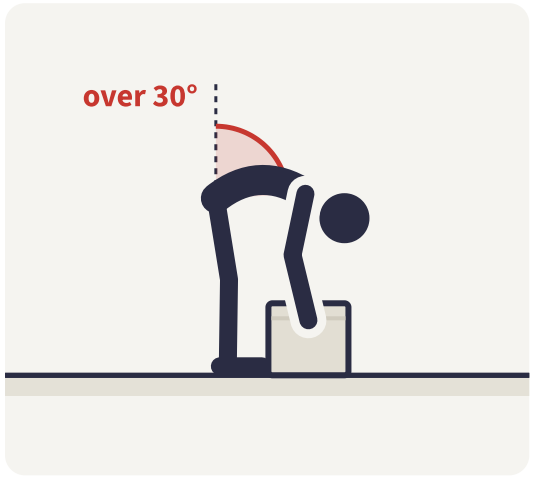
Poor lifting posture increases the risk of back injury. **Musculoskeletal disorders are the most common work-related health problem in Europe.**

Possible consequences

- Back injury
- Crush or cut injury
- Fracture
- Chronic pain
- Musculoskeletal disorder
- Time off work and downtime

STRAIGHT LEGS

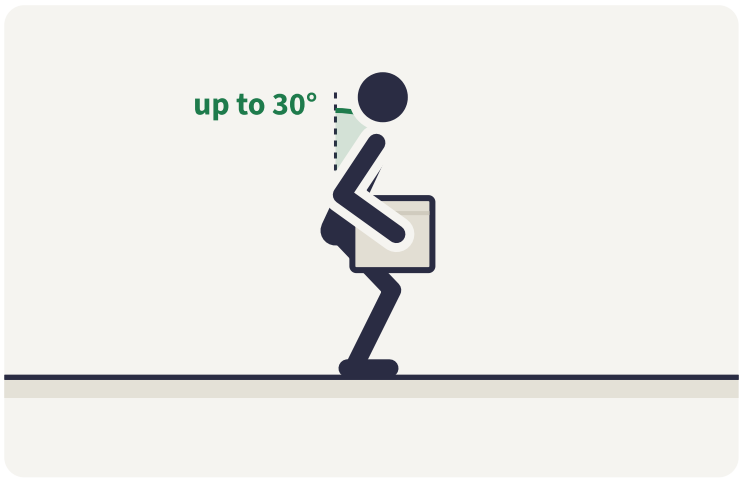
Stooping



- Back does the lifting
- Load held away from body
- More strain on lower back

KNEES BENT

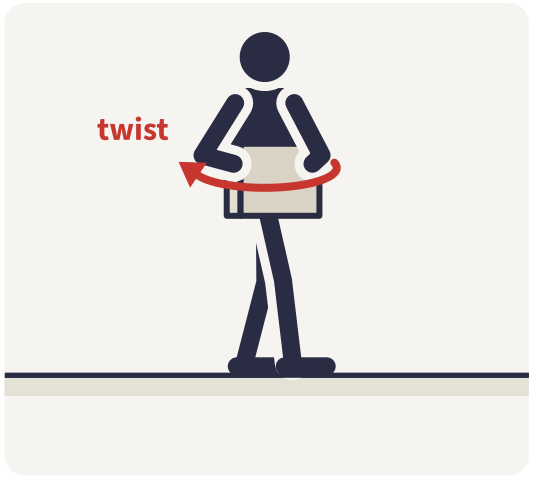
Straight back



- Legs do the lifting
- Load held against body
- Grip is firm

WITH A LOAD

Twisted back



- Feet stay in place
- Back twists instead
- Needs more muscle force

Any forward bend or twist of the upper body adds to the health risk, especially a bend over 30° or a load held away from the body.

DO

- **Check the weight, grip and route before lifting.**
- **Use a lifting aid or lift with a colleague.**
- **Place feet either side of the load.**
- **Bend your knees, keep your back straight.**
- **Pull the load close to you.**
- **Turn with your feet, don’t twist.**
- **Lift at a steady pace.**
- **Report pain to your manager at once.**

DON’T

- **Don’t lift for hours without a break**
  Frequent, prolonged lifting strains the spine most of all.
- **Don’t twist while holding a load**
  Twisting with a load increases the risk of back injury.
- **Don’t lift loads above shoulder height**
  This is as risky as lifting while stooping.
- **Don’t lift over 25 kg by hand**
  There is no safe limit: for most, 20–25 kg is already heavy.
- **Don’t lift on slippery or uneven floors**
  You could fall with the load.
- **Don’t grip a slippery load or handle**
  It can slip out of your hands and fall.
- **Don’t lift a load that is too heavy for you**
  If instructions are not enough, you may refuse; tell your employer.

REMEMBER

Check the load. Keep it close. Use your legs.

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