

## It's a fact...

You should know how to safely perform *lifting* and *lowering* tasks.

A poorly designed materials-handling task is one where the strength requirements to complete the task exceed the strength capabilities of most workers. Simply put, most workers would not be able to perform the task without overexertion.

Poorly designed tasks generally require workers to lift, lower, push, pull, or carry heavy loads. These tasks may also include excessive bending, reaching, or twisting of the body.

The following guidelines provide suggestions on how to properly **lift** and **lower** various objects.

### To increase material flow through the workplace:

- ◆ Establish adequate receiving, storage, and shipping facilities.
- ◆ Maintain adequate aisle and access areas.

### To eliminate the need to lift or lower manually, use:

- ◆ Lift tables and platforms.
- ◆ Lift trucks.
- ◆ Cranes and hoists.
- ◆ Drum and barrel dumpers.
- ◆ Elevating conveyors.
- ◆ Elevated pallets.
- ◆ Gravity dump and/or chute systems.
- ◆ Vacuum systems.
- ◆ Automatic feed systems.



*Performing heavy work with an extended reach increases the risk of injury.*

**To increase weight to a point where it must be mechanically handled:**

- ◆ Use pallets to handle raw materials and products in bulk quantities.
- ◆ Use the unit load concept (e.g., bulk handling of large bins or containers).

**To reduce the weight of the object(s) or the force required to lift or lower the object(s):**

- ◆ Reduce the weight and capacity of the container(s).
- ◆ Improve the handhold or grip on the object.
- ◆ Reduce the load in the container or don't fill the container.
- ◆ Specify the quantity per container to suppliers.
- ◆ Assign the job to two or more persons.

**To reduce the hand distance from the body:**

- ◆ Change the shape of the object or container.
- ◆ Provide grips or handles.
- ◆ Provide better access to objects.

**To convert lift/carry or lower/carry combinations to a push or pull task, use:**

- ◆ Conveyors.
- ◆ Hand trucks.
- ◆ Ball-caster tables.
- ◆ Four-wheel carts.



This fact sheet is a product of the DoD Ergonomics Working Group and was adapted from their June 2000 publication, *Preventing Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders in the Workplace*.

Written for both supervisors and workers, this fact sheet provides basic information on ergonomics. For more information, visit the working group's Web site at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/ergowg/product.htm>.