

# BALDWIN EHS CONSULTANTS

## TOOL BOX TALKS

### BENDING, LIFTING, TWISTING & REACHING

Back injuries can be sustained from lifting lighter weight objects when bending, twisting, or reaching is involved. Although many people complete these tasks routinely without injury, if improper bending, lifting, twisting, or reaching is involved, you may be more susceptible to back injury.

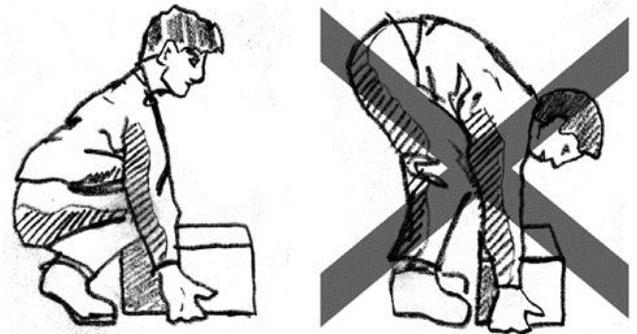


Fortunately many of these injuries can be easily avoided. Bending at the waist causes excessive strain on the muscles supporting the back. When these muscles are fatigued or out of shape, their ability to properly support your back is lessened. The result may produce spasms in the back or may lead to a back injury.

Twisting produces excessive stress on the back by placing the spine out of alignment and usually occurs when you are in a hurry or are working in a cramped area. The twisting action makes the back more vulnerable to injury but does not always result in an injury. Many injuries can be avoided by keeping the items being lifted in front of you or by providing sufficient workspace.

Reaching while attempting to lift, will also increase the chance for back injury. Objects that are further away from your body place greater pressure on your back. For example, when holding a book at arms length the muscles become easily fatigued; however, if the same book is held closer to the body, the muscles are less easily fatigued. This same concept holds true when lifting and reaching.

Often it is not the object that was lifted that caused the injury but the manner in which the worker lifted the object. Therefore, if the work area is set up so that the general lifting activities can be completed without the need to excessively bend, twist, or reach, many of the lifting related injuries may be prevented.



Setting up the jobsite to minimize the lifting exposure should be a daily exercise. Using material handling equipment (when possible) is the best way of minimizing the fatigue you may experience from lifting.

While there are several ways of lifting materials at a job site, you alone can implement the best method. Take a moment each day to evaluate the best way to set up your job site and consider alternative methods to reduce any strain on your back.