

# Lifting Basics

Most back injuries result from improper lifting. Not only is a back injury painful, it can also be permanent and end your career. Using the following guidelines for correct lifting will help you avoid injury.

## ***Before you lift, check out the load and ask yourself:***

- ◆ Is this object too heavy or too awkward for me to lift and carry alone?
- ◆ How high do I have to lift it?
- ◆ How far do I have to carry it?
- ◆ Is the path clear?
- ◆ Is there a mechanical device I can use instead?

## ***How Does Incorrect Lifting Affect You?***

- ◆ Your back supports 70 to 80 percent of your bodyweight when you're standing up straight.
- ◆ When you bend at the waist without support, your back actually supports six times the weight you're lifting.

## ***How to Lift***

- ◆ Make sure your footing is firm and that your feet are positioned correctly. Stand with your feet apart for balance: one foot close to the load, the other foot slightly behind you.
- ◆ Lower yourself into a squatting position with your back upright.
- ◆ When you lift, bend at the knees, not the waist.
- ◆ Use your whole hand, not just your fingers, to firmly grip the object.
- ◆ Hug the object close to you, keeping your back straight, and let the stronger muscles in your thighs do the actual lifting.
- ◆ Straighten your legs and move slowly.
- ◆ Never twist your body. If you must turn, point your feet in the direction you need to turn.
- ◆ Set the load down by slowly bending your knees, letting your legs do most of the work.
- ◆ Don't let go of the load until it's on the ground.

