

Back Up the Truck...Time to Haul Away Those Gifts!

Paul Overshiner, PT
Physical Therapist
Andover Physical Therapy

By now, the holiday season has come and gone. Maybe you've stowed away all your gifts (or returned them to the store in search of bigger and better game), maybe you're having an extended Christmas vacation with all the new toys, or maybe you're too embroiled in shopping the after Christmas sales to even remember what you opened Christmas morning!

If you've yet to mount that new plasma T.V., hang that Rembrandt that Aunt Millie stumbled across at an estate sale (why didn't she keep it for herself?), or put those boxes of ornaments and lights back on the top shelf, now is a good time to remind/review you on the proper ways to lift and carry boxes and other heavier objects, with emphasis on protecting your back:

If you are unsure what the object you are about to pick up weighs, try gently pushing it from the side with your foot. That will give you a general idea what you are dealing with.

When lifting an object, keep feet shoulder width apart and bend your knees. Minimize bending over at the back to pick up the object. Lift with your legs, not your back. Stand close to the object as you lift.

Keep the object as close to you as possible when carrying it. If you must turn to put the object elsewhere, ensure that you don't lead with the back. In other words, don't twist the back, instead, rotate while leading with the hip.

If a back injury should occur, seek advice from your doctor or physical therapist. Early intervention is much better than later intervention. However, if you already have a back injury, later intervention is better than no intervention at all.