

# Preventing Back Pain - Proper Lifting Techniques

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Low back pain is one of the most common medical problems that individuals experience. According to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases it is estimated that 8 out of 10 people experience back pain at some point in their lives. Fortunately, many cases of back pain can be prevented or the risk of its occurrence reduced by following some healthy living habits. Eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly to strengthen the back muscles, and maintaining good posture all play a part in creating a healthy back.

One of the most important, and easiest, ways of protecting your back is to use a proper technique when lifting objects whether they are heavy or light. The first step in this process is to plan ahead and know how heavy the object is that you are lifting and where you are moving the object to. Clear a path if necessary before you begin lifting. If you determine an object is too heavy, or awkward in shape, find someone to assist you in lifting it. When you lift an object you should maintain a solid base by keeping your feet shoulder width apart. Bend your knees and keep your back straight. Grip the object in a way that keeps the object close to your body during the entire lift. During the lift tighten your abdominal muscles. This will help hold your back in a good lifting position and will help prevent excessive force on the spine. Always raise and lower the object you are lifting by bending your knees and not your back. Your legs are many times stronger than your back muscles so let them do the work. Never twist or bend while you are moving the object. Face in the direction in which you are walking. If you need to turn, stop, turn in small steps, and then continue walking. If you lift objects frequently as part of your job or daily activity it may be a good idea to wear a back support. A back support can help you maintain a better lifting posture. Following these simple steps daily will make them become a life long good habit that will protect your back for the years to come.