



MANUAL HANDLING POLICY

Good Manual Handling Technique Guidance

The following, taken from HSE guidance to the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, provides an outline of the ideal way to lift objects. The principles of lifting in the way stated should be followed for any lifting task. Where a lifting task will not allow these principles to be followed a system will need to be designed to reduce the risk of injury to a minimum.

A good handling technique is no substitute for other risk reduction steps such as changing the task, load or working environment. There may be occasions, however, where it is unreasonable to not lift objects or where it may increase the risk to others if a child or an object is not lifted and moved.

Prior to lifting any object, first check whether or not it can be rocked, pivoted, slid or rolled – there will still be some degree of manual effort attached to these types of movements, however, they will enable some loads to be moved using their own centre of gravity as a balance.

There is no single correct way to lift every object or person that needs to be moved. Training in good handling techniques should be provided for specific lifting operations – for example the techniques used for lifting a child will differ from those used to lift an adult and will differ again to those used for lifting an object – although the basic principles will remain the same i.e. do not lift and carry difficult, heavy or unwieldy loads that can be moved using other means or that are outside your own capabilities.

If a manual lift is required the following points should always be considered:

1. Stop, think and plan the lift

- Examine the load to be moved.
- Assess its weight and shape and note any sharp edges.

Is the load stable and evenly distributed? Unstable loads would include containers with liquid in them, people and animals; loads where the weight is not equally distributed may include furniture and machinery.

If there are appropriate handling aids available, can you use them?

If so use them, if not, can you continue without placing yourself at risk of injury?

If you can continue plan your route.

Are you wearing any clothing that may snag on the load or may restrict movement? Do you need to use gloves when lifting the object?

Will you be able to see above the object whilst you are moving?

2. Plan the route

Is there a clear, unobstructed route between where the object is to be lifted and where it is to be put down?

If not, clear away obstructions and arrange for doors to be held open (if these are fire doors that have not been fitted with suitable smoke/heat detectors you must ensure that they are closed as soon as you pass through).

If you cannot arrange for doors to be open is there anywhere close to any door where you can safely put the equipment down before opening the door and passing through?

Are there rest stops along the route to enable you to take a short rest and recovery breaks if carrying a long distance or if carrying a heavy weight?

Is the flooring bumpy, variation in levels or slippery?

If so these issues need to be addressed prior to the lift taking place.

Is the destination ready to accept the load being carried?

3. Adopt a good posture

Place your feet apart to give a balanced stable base for lifting. Your feet should be on either side of the object or along two sides of a box, for example, the leading foot (the one which is first stood on when moving off) should be pointed in the direction in which you intend to move.

Your body should face in the direction of which you intend to move.

Bend the knees so that your hands, when grasping the load, are as nearly level with your waist as possible.

Do not kneel or over flex your knees – your knees should not be fully bent as they will not provide enough power to lift the object – when lifting the power is supplied by your leg muscles.

Keep your back straight, maintaining its natural curve (tucking the chin in to your neck when lifting will help).

Lean forward a little over the load if necessary to get a good grip.

Keep shoulders level and facing in the same direction as the hips.

4. Get a firm grip

Try to keep your arms within the boundary formed by your legs.

A hook grip will be less fatiguing than keeping your fingers straight.
You may need to vary your grip as you lift the object – if so do this smoothly.

If the object is being lifted from the floor it may be necessary to first lift it onto a table at your waist height before altering your grip to carry it further.

5. Lifting the object

Once you have got into the best posture possible and have a secure grip you should first test the weight of the object – if it is heavier than you thought, or if you have not the strength to lift it fully exerting yourself at this stage could cause injury.

If, after testing the weight, you believe you are capable of lifting the object, smoothly start to lift, lifting your head and gripping the object using your legs to raise you and the object. At the same time start to move in the direction you are to travel – unless you are lifting and do not bend sideways.

Hold the load close to your body – if it is an uneven hold the heaviest part of it close to your body.

6. Carrying the load

- Keep the load close to your body.
- Adopt a stable position.
- Do not bend, twist, stoop or lean back.
- Keep your head up when handling.
- If your arms start to feel tired put the object down as soon as you can.
- Don't change your grip unless the load is sufficiently supported.
- Move smoothly and do not lift/handle more than you can easily manage.

7. Putting the load down

The method for putting the load down is the reverse of the method for lifting it – keep your back straight and bend your knees, keeping your weight close to your body.

Put the object down before adjusting it – if precise positioning is required this can be done after it has been put down by sliding it.

Never bend your back when putting any object down – you will be injured if you do.

Take care not to trap any fingers or crush toes when setting an object down.

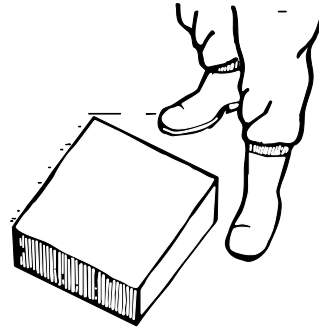
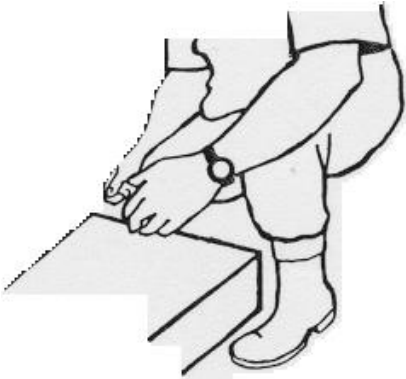
Safe Kinetic Handling Techniques

Kinetic handling is a correct and safe method of manual handling. It uses the strong leg and thigh muscles, not the weaker back muscles and maintains the natural shape of the spine throughout the lifting process. In kinetic handling, the correct posture in performing a task is important.

There are seven points to remember:

Point 1 - Feet

The feet should be placed apart to give a balanced and stable base for lifting. The leading leg should be as far forward as is comfortable.



Point 2 - Knees

Bend the knees, keep them flexible. When grasping the load, the hands should be about level with the waist. Do not kneel or over flex the knees.

Point 3 - Back

Keep the back straight, keeping its natural curve. If necessary, lean forward a little over the load to get a better grip. Keep shoulders level and facing in the same direction as your hips.

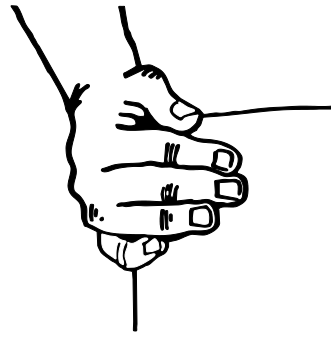


Point 4 - Arms

Keep your arms close to your body for all lifting and carrying. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If a close approach to the load isn't possible try sliding it towards you before attempting the lift.

Point 5 -Grip

Get a secure grip on the load. Try to keep the arms within the boundary formed by the legs. A hook grip is preferable to keeping the fingers straight and is less likely to cause fatigue.

**Point 6 - Chin in, head up**

Keep the chin in and the head up. Don't jerk, the lifting movement should be smooth and natural and the chin should be raised as the lift begins, keeping control of the load.

Point 7 - Use of body weight

Use the momentum of the body weight to aid movement. All movements should be smooth and natural. Jerking, twisting or straining movements should be avoided.



Lifting should feel comfortable. Lifting movements will remain smooth and natural providing the back and head are kept naturally erect. This is achieved by looking straight ahead when straightening the legs instead of looking down at the load.

Guidelines for Weights

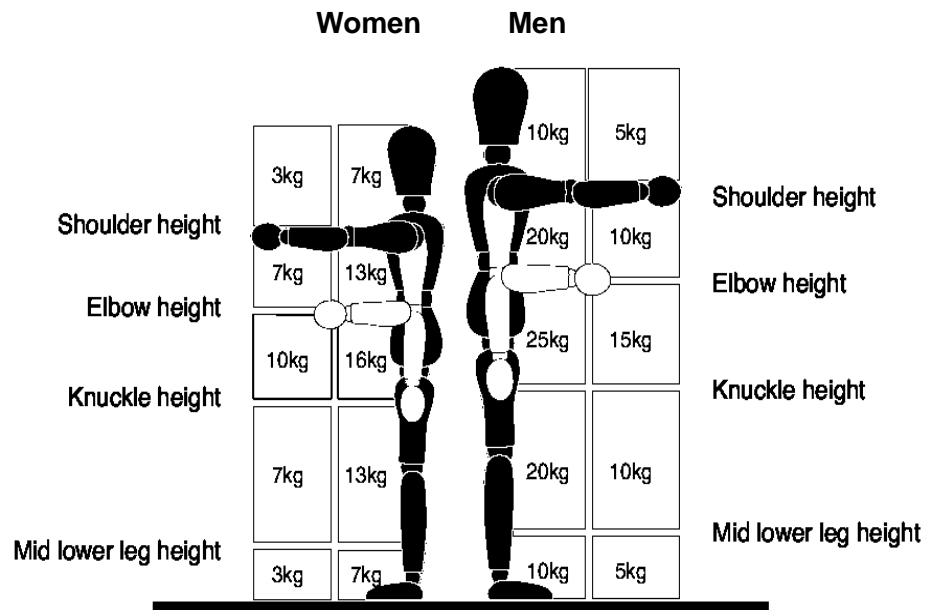


Figure 2 Lifting and lowering

Remember Manual Handling should be avoided whenever possible.

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