

Safe Body Mechanics

Winter/Spring 2017



What are body mechanics?

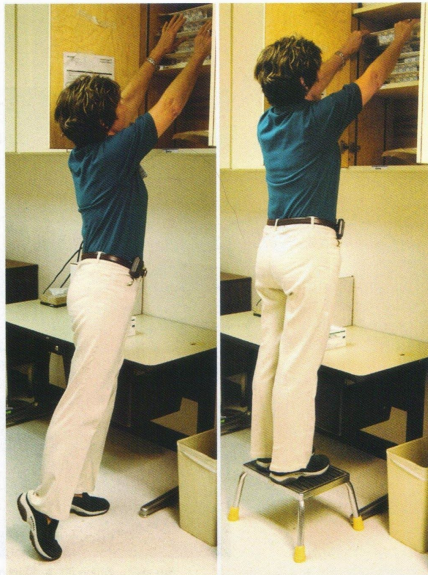
Body mechanics are the relationship between your posture and your movement. Good body mechanics avoids putting undue strain on your back.

Why are body mechanics important?

- Protection from injuring yourself and/or other individuals
- Reduces fatigue
- Reduces strain on your spine
- Maximizes body strength
- Uses your core muscles which give you stability

Lifting objects safely: Improper lifting technique can cause neck, shoulder and back pain and possibly even more serious injuries. Learning the proper way to lift will help you minimize the risk of pain and injury.

- Plan ahead before lifting heavy objects. Make sure you have a clear path. This will help you avoid any awkward or sudden movements that can strain your muscles.
- Test an object's weight before lifting by pushing it with your foot. If it seems too heavy, ask for help.
- Lift with your legs, not your back. Don't lean over an object to lift it. Face the object you intend to lift and avoid twisting. Instead, stand close to the object, bend your legs and keep your back straight, then lift.
- Keep feet shoulder-width apart and maintain your balance by distributing the object's weight equally on both sides of your body.
- If a back injury does occur, seek help from your physical therapist. What starts as a minor back injury can progress to a chronic condition without early intervention.



Reaching for an object

When reaching for an object:

- Keep back straight
- Reach with two hands
- Face the object
- Stand on a stable step-stool to reach high items
- Bend knees slightly

Do Not:

- Overreach by standing on toes
- Reach with one hand
- Twist at your waist
- Stand on an unsafe surface
- Reach with legs locked in a straight position

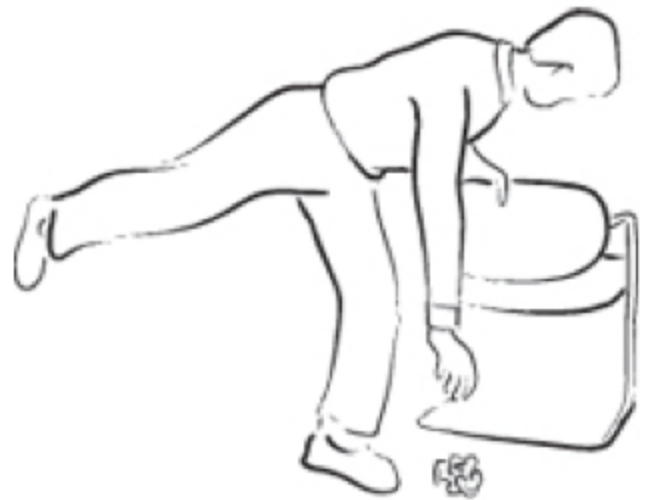
Reaching into a bin or car trunk:

- Stand with feet shoulder distance apart.
- Slightly mend knees and squat, bending at hip joints, not waist.
- Slide the load as close to your body as possible
- Raid yourself with leg and hip muscles
- If possible, rest knees against edge for support



Golfer's Lift

- The golfer's lift is a way to lift a light-weight objects from the floor while still maintaining good body mechanics.
- You can hold onto a solid object for balance if needed.
- Don't force your body to conform to the workspace.
- Use the golfer's lift to pick up light, small loads when you can't bend your knees or get close to the object.
- Swing one leg straight out behind you.
- Keep your back straight while your body leans forward.
- To help support your body, place one hand on your knee or on a nearby solid object.



Pushing / Pulling

- Clear path first
- Face object and crouch slightly; for heavier objects, increase crouch
- Pushing takes slightly less energy with most objects
- Push/Pull with arms partly flexed
- Push/pull in a straight line, force parallel to floor
- Trunk in slightly forward flexion with normal lumbar lordosis
- Use leg strength, not arms/back



Keep the back stright

Bend from the Hip

Bend from the knee



PROPER TECHNIQUE FOR SHOVELLING SNOW



Keep feet wide apart. Put weight on front foot close to shovel and use leg to push shovel straight ahead.
TRISH McALASTER / THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Shift weight to rear foot and keep shovel-load close to body. Lift with arms and legs, not back.

Turn feet in the direction of throw and pivot entire body rather than twisting at the waist.

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