

LIFTING/PROPER BODY MECHANICS

What is Proper Body Mechanics?

Body mechanics is a term used to describe the ways we move as we go about our daily lives. It includes how we hold our bodies when we sit, stand, lift, carry, bend and sleep.

Why are proper body mechanics important?

Poor body mechanics can often cause neck and back problems. When we don't move correctly and safely, the spine is subjected to abnormal stresses that over time can lead to degeneration of spinal structures like discs and joints, injury and unnecessary wear and tear.

Lifting

- Place the load immediately in front of you
- Bend the knees to a full squat or lunge position
- Bring the load towards your chest
- Assume a neutral position with your back
- Lift from the legs to the standing position

DO NOT:

- Lift from a twisted/sideways position
- Lift from a forward stooped/imbalanced position

Sitting

- Place your buttocks at the back of the seat while maintaining a small space between the back of your knees and the seat of the chair
- Place your feet flat on the floor with your knees bent at a 90° angle
- Pull your shoulders back and lift your chest
- Lift your chin until it is level and relax your jaw and mouth

Standing

- Avoid standing in one position for prolonged periods of time
- Change positions as often as you can
- Be aware of your posture
- Make sure the surface you are standing on is firm and level

Reaching

- Always check the weight of the load before moving it
- Reach only as high as you comfortably can
- Use a step stool when appropriate
- Let your arms and legs carry the weight, not your back

Pulling and Pushing

- Stay close to load, do not lean forward
- Whenever possible, push rather than pull
- Use both arms
- Keep hips facing in the direction of the push

Bending

- Kneel down on one knee or squat with feet apart
- Bend knees and hips, not your back
- When leaning forward, move your whole body; not just your arms

Turning

- Pivot with your feet - don't twist
- Allow for clearance
- Keep the load in front of you



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