

## Back Safety – 7 Ways To Take A Load Off !



**STANDING** - Shift your posture by resting one foot on a step or rail 2 or 3 inches higher than the ground for a few minutes. Then switch to the other foot. The worst way to stand is leaning forward with your hips against the counter; it's liable to force you into a vulnerable, strained stance to maintain your balance.



**SITTING** - The best way to sit is with your buttocks well back in the seat and the small of your back supported. A firm pillow 1-1/2 inches thick can be tucked behind your lower back for extra support. Keep your knees above your hips if possible to reduce the stress on your spine and the muscles and ligaments that support it.



**CARRYING** - Balance the load: Divide heavy loads into two bundles that can be carried at your sides, one in each hand. If a load can't be divided, hold it close to your body with elbows resting against your sides and the weight balance evenly. If carrying the load with one arm, keep it as close to the body as possible and avoiding "swinging" it.



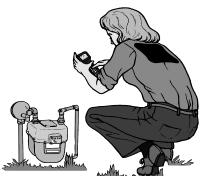
**REACHING** - When something is out of reach, the temptation is to stand on tiptoe and stretch - resist that thought! It's a quick way to wrench your muscles. If you can't take time to get the stepstool, hold your abdominal muscles tight and reach, don't stretch. The best rule is, keep things you use frequently at an easy-to-reach height.



**LIFTING** - Size up the load - do you need help? If you aren't sure if you'll need help - get some anyway! Stand close to the load with your feet at shoulder width. Bend your knees and squat down. Tighten your stomach muscles. Grasp the load firmly and **LIFT WITH YOUR LEGS!** Don't use your back to lift.



**PUSHING / PULLING** - Always try to push rather than pull a load. One foot should be behind the other and your weight balance between them. Push the object in a slow, steady motion. If you must pull, assume a similar position and face the load. Trying to drag something behind you can strain your shoulders and neck as well as your back.



**BENDING DOWN** - The temptation is to bend at the waist to pick something up. Instead use the same procedure as if lifting - stand close to what you need to pick up, with your feet at shoulder width, or one slightly ahead. Bend your knees and squat down. Tighten your stomach muscles. Grasp the object and **STAND WITH YOUR LEGS!** Don't use your back.