

AGRICULTURAL SAFETY TOPICS

PREVENTING LIFTING & OVEREXERTION INJURIES

Objective:

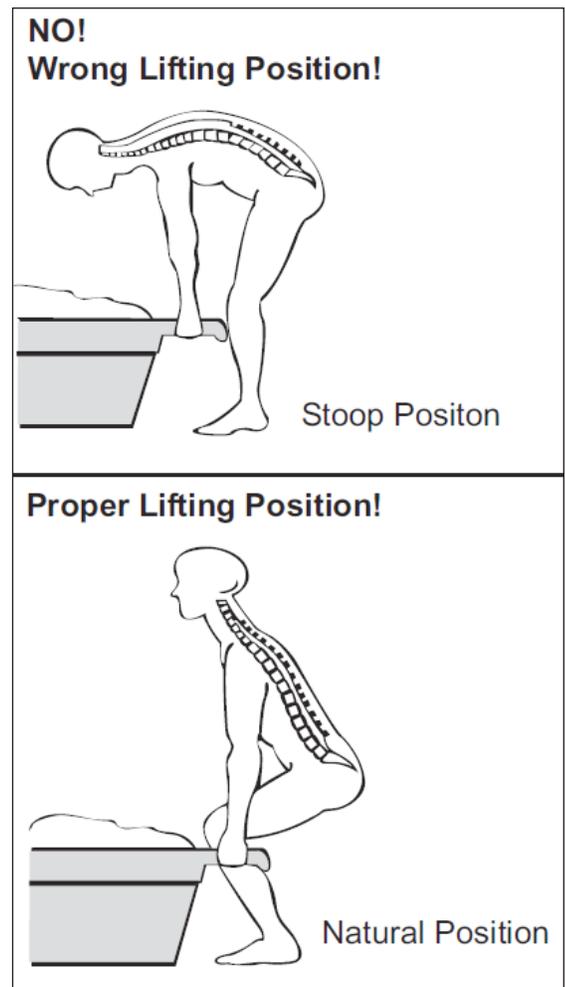
To be able to lift properly to avoid injuries.

Background:

Improper lifting techniques are responsible for a large percentage of back injuries among agricultural workers. Proper methods of lifting and handling protect against injury, and make work easier. You need to “think” about what you are going to do *before* bending to pick up an object. Over time, safe lifting technique should become a habit.

Things to consider BEFORE lifting or moving items

- Prepare your back. Avoid lifting items immediately after periods of prolonged sitting. Stand and walk around or stretch to prepare the back muscles.
- Plan your move. Ensure your pathway is clear before you lift or move items and remove any obstacles ahead of time. Know where the load will be placed before lifting or moving. Avoid placing loads on the floor if possible.
- Get help. Know the weight of the load and your capabilities. Avoid lifting a load that is awkward or too heavy for you. Get assistance or use equipment (e.g. wheelbarrow, cart, or dolly).



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Proper lifting techniques

- Move as close to the load as possible and position your feet about shoulder width apart to establish a wide base of support.
- Bend your knees. Avoid rounding your back. Keep the slight inward curve in your lower back.
- Test the load's weight by lifting up one end. Ensure the load is free to move.
- Grab the load firmly with your whole hand, not just the fingers. Keep the load balanced.
- Use your legs to lift the load, not your back. Lift smoothly. Avoid sudden, jerky movements.
- Keep the load close to your body, with your elbows slightly bent and your upper arms straight.
- Face in the direction of the lift. Move your feet to turn. Avoid twisting your body.

Make it a habit to follow the above steps to reduce your risk of having an injury.

Team lifting must be co-ordinated

If the weight, shape, or size of an object makes the job too much for one person, ask for help.

Ideally, workers should be of approximately the same size for team lifting. One individual needs to be responsible for control of the action to ensure proper co-ordination. If one worker lifts too soon, shifts the load, or lowers it improperly, either they or the person working with them may be injured.

Review The Following Points:

- Think and plan **before** lifting.
- Bend your knees, not your back.
- Keep the slight inward curve in your lower back
- Keep the load close to the body.
- Don't twist. Move your feet to turn.

Based upon: Ohio State University Extension. *Lifting*. Retrieved from website <http://ohioline.osu.edu/atts/modules.html>

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