



Lifting Safely

Safe Work Practices

A healthy back is critical for a long career in the kitchen. Soft-tissue injuries such as strains can take a long time to heal through immobilization and rest. When moving objects throughout the kitchen, be sure to minimize the risk of injury by using mechanical assistance (dollies, carts) or help from others to move heavy items.

Direct Hazards: Moving Heavy or Abnormal-shaped Objects, Repetitive Motions

Potential Injuries: Musculoskeletal Injuries including Sprains, Strains, or Inflammation of the Muscles, Tendons, Ligaments, Joints, etc.

Equipment: Dolly, Cart with wheels

Personal Protective Equipment: N/A

Training Required: On-the-job Training

Legal Requirements: N/A

Safe Work Practices

Before:

- Proactively examine objects to gauge their weight before lifting. Know your strengths and limitations.
- If necessary, share the load with a partner or get mechanical assistance for heavy loads.
- Have dollies or carts available and in good working condition, encourage staff to use them whenever needed.
- Empty garbage containers before they become too full so that the weight is manageable and you can properly tie the bag closed.
- Place your feet shoulder-width apart for good balance and face the object you are lifting.
- Bend your knees with a neutral back posture.
- Hold the object as close to your body as possible with a tight grip.

During:

- Once the object is secure in your grip and close to your body, primarily lift the weight with your legs.
- Lift smoothly and slowly with no jerking or twisting motions.
- Pivot with your feet rather than twisting your back.
- Push a load rather than pull it.

After:

- Store heavy objects on lower shelves and lighter objects on higher shelves reduces the need for moving heavy items above shoulder height.
- Do not over-do it. Take breaks or ask for help when you need it.
- Stretch your back and legs, be fit for the task.

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