

Ergonomics

When The Standard Lift Won't Work

We've all been trained to lift safely by squatting down and picking up the object with both hands.

That's fine when you can maneuver yourself into this position next to the item you are lifting. Squatting down instead of bending at the waist can help prevent back injuries by putting the load on your legs rather than your back.

But this is not always possible to use this lifting method. For example, many of us working in manufacturing industries spend a good part of the work day picking components out of deep bins.

Because the sides of the bin prevent you from bending your knees, you may try to lean over the side and pick up the material with both hands. This method puts a strain on your easily injured lower back.

If the item you are picking out of the bin isn't too heavy or too awkward to handle with one hand, there's a better way to do it. Use a one-handed lift, also known as the golfer's lift.



Here's how it is done:

- Stand close to the bin.
- Put your non-lifting hand on the side of the bin.
- Bend over the container. You can also put one foot out behind you for balance.
- Pick up the object with one hand.
- Use your non-lifting hand to push your body back up out of the bin. Make sure your arms and shoulders take the load, not your back.

Look for ways to eliminate heavy or awkward lifts from your work routine. Perhaps the parts bin can be tilted so you can reach items more easily or talk to your supervisor about

the possibility of installing an automatic spring device so the bottom of the bin will rise slowly as material is taken out. You may be able to reposition the components so you can reach them at waist level. You may be able to use mechanical picking devices. Get help with heavy or difficult loads.

Here are some more reminders about safe lifting:

- Clear your route before you attempt to move an object. Make sure you have a clear pathway and a place to set the load down easily.
- Check the weight of the object to see if you can handle it. Look at the weight on the label, or lift a corner of the object.
- Keep the load close to your body as you carry it and set it down.
- Lift the object straight up smoothly and do not twist your body once you have made the lift.

A modified one-handed lifting technique may be useful in some situations, such as picking items out of a large container. No matter how you lift, protect your back from injury.

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