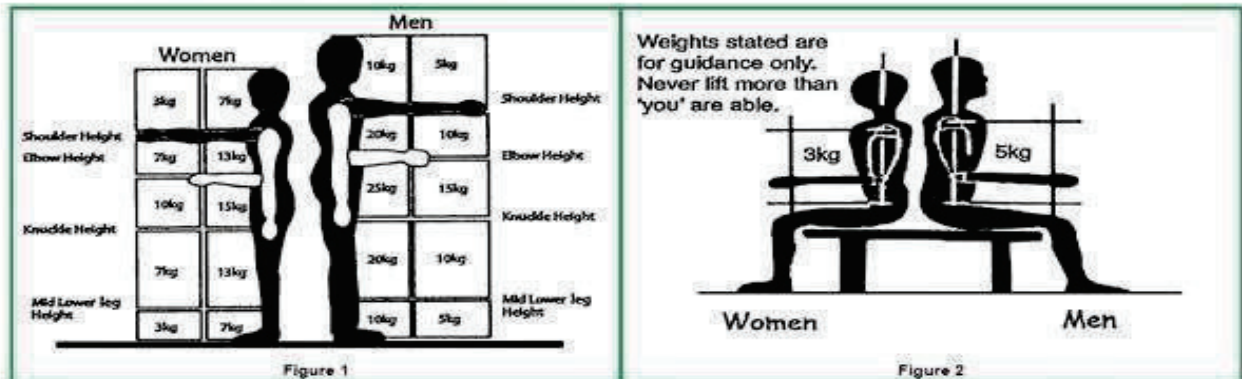


MANUAL HANDLING

Tasks involving the regular lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling of heavy loads must be assessed for risks to the health and safety of workers. Routine and frequent tasks involving manual handling should be eliminated, wherever possible, by providing mechanical aids, adapting the workstation or redesigning the work process.

Employees should always be trained in specific workplace procedures and the general principles of manual handling described in this poster.

Do not lift more than you can safely push or carry. Carefully assess each load before you lift it. If you consider it beyond your ability, ask your managers for advice. Figure 1 shows recommended maximum weights when standing; figure 2, whilst seated.



STOP AND THINK

Plan work that involves manual handling. How heavy is the load? Where is going to be placed? Use appropriate handling aids where possible. Will assistance be required? Remove obstructions, such as discarded wrapping materials. For long lifts, such as from floor to shoulder height, consider resting the load mid-way on a table or bench to change grip.



ADOPT A STABLE POSITION

Stand with feet apart, one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load if it is on the ground). Be prepared to move your feet during the lift to maintain a stable posture. Do not wear over-tight clothing or unsuitable footwear; it may make the task more difficult.

ENSURE A GOOD HOLD ON THE LOAD

Where possible keep the load as close to your body as possible. Use any handles or devices already fitted to the load. Keep the load in balance.

KEEP THE LOAD CLOSE TO YOUR WAIST

While lifting keep the load close to your waist for as long as possible. The distance of the load from the spine at waist height is an important factor in the overall load on the spine and back muscles. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.



KEEP YOUR BACK AS STRAIGHT AS POSSIBLE

Slightly bending your back and knees at the start of the lift is preferable to either fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (full or deep squatting), but should be avoided wherever possible.

DON'T FLEX ANY FURTHER WHILE LIFTING

This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.

AVOID TWISTING THE BACK OR LEANING SIDEWAYS ESPECIALLY WHILE THE BACK IS BENT.

Keep your shoulders level and facing in the same direction as your hips. Turning by moving your feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.