Handling & Lifting

Good handling technique for lifting

There are some simple things to do before and during the lift/carry:

- Remove obstructions from the route.
- For a long lift, plan to rest the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.
- Keep the load close to the waist. The load should be kept close to the body for as long as possible while lifting.
- Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body.
- Adopt a stable position and make sure your feet are apart, with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance.

Think before lifting/handling.

- Plan the lift.
- Can handling aids be used?
- Where is the load going to be placed?
- Will help be needed with the load?
- Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials.
- For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.

Adopt a stable position.

The feet should be apart with 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 your stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, which may make this difficult.

Get a good hold.

Where possible, the load should be hugged as close as possible to the body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only.

Start in a good posture.

At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).

Don't flex the back any further while lifting.

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

Keep the load close to the waist.

Keep the load close to the body for as long as possible while lifting.
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.

Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent.

Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

Keep the head up when handling.

Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely.

Move smoothly.

The load should not be jerked or snatched as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.

Don't lift or handle more than can be easily managed.

There is a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.

Put down, and then adjust.

If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position.