

# News & Notes

## LIFTING HAZARD ASSESSMENT TOOL

Before lifting, perform the following lifting assessment by asking these questions:

- 1) Does the load exceed 50 pounds?
- 2) Is the object difficult to bring close to the body because of its size, bulk or shape?
- 3) Is the load hard to handle because it lacks handles or cut outs for handles, has slippery surfaces or sharp edges?
- 4) Is the footing unsafe (for example: are the floors slippery, inclined or uneven?)
- 5) Does the task require fast movement such as throwing, swinging or rapid walking?
- 6) Does the task require stressful body postures, such as stooping to the floor, twisting, reaching overhead or excessive lateral bending?
- 7) Is most of the load handled by only one hand, arm or shoulder?
- 8) Does the task require working in extreme temperatures or with noise, vibration, poor lighting or airborne contaminants?
- 9) Does the task require working in a confined area?
- 10) Does the lifting frequency exceed 5 lifts per minute?
- 11) Does the vertical lifting distance exceed 3 feet?
- 12) Do carries last longer than a minute?
- 13) Do tasks that require large sustained pushing or pulling forces exceed 30 seconds duration?
- 14) Do extended reach static holding tasks exceed 1 minute?

The more "yes" answers you have the greater the chance of injuring your back while lifting. Attempt to eliminate/minimize some of the "yes" answers by rethinking the load, the path you will take and the tools you may want to use. For example: break loads down into lighter loads, have someone assist you with large bulky items, find somewhere to rest the load rather than holding it, and so forth.



## RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

- 1) What rock group consists of four famous men, but none of them sing?
- 2) I'm the size of an elephant, but I weigh nothing. What am I?
- 3) Why is an island like the letter "T"?
- 4) When you want to use me, you throw me away. When you're done using me, you bring me in. What am I?

Answer on page 2 Safety Bits & Pieces

# Safety Matters



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## Do You Know How to Lift Properly?

Eighty percent of Americans will experience low back pain at some point in their lives. One sure way to end up with an aching back is to lift something the wrong way. Do you know how to lift a squirming toddler? How about a heavy package that arrives at your door? Take this quiz and see how much you know about lifting.

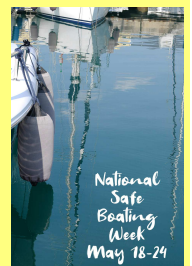
1. Before you lift something, you should test to see how heavy it is by pushing it with your feet or hands. True False
2. If you want to lift something from the floor:
  - a. Keep your feet very far apart with your knees locked and bend at the waist to reach and lift
  - b. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart, bend at the knees and squat until you are level with the object, then use your leg muscles to raise yourself up.
  - c. Keep your legs straight with your feet together and bend over to pick it up
  - d. All of the above
3. If you twist sideways while holding something heavy, you're more likely to injure your back. True False
4. In order for you to lift a heavy object safely, how close should it be?
  - a. Within arm's length
  - b. At least two inches away from your body
  - c. As close as possible
  - d. None of the above
5. If you're picking up something small and light from the floor, it's okay to simply bend over at the waist and pick it up. True False
6. Which factors put you at greater risk for injuring your back while lifting?
  - a. Smoking
  - b. Poor posture
  - c. Lifting very slowly
  - d. All of the above
7. If you lift heavy objects often, you should always wear a back belt for support. True False
8. While traveling, which of these is the best choice for carry-on luggage?
  - a. A wheeled suitcase
  - b. A backpack with padded straps
  - c. A duffel bag with a padded handle
  - d. A courier bag with a wide shoulder strap

### ANSWERS ON PAGE 2.

(Quiz and Answer Key created by Laurie Udesky)

## SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

National Safe Boating Week is May 18-24. Here are some items that every boat should have: Life Jackets for each passenger; Navigation lights that work; Audible horn for half a mile; Distress flares and day signals; Tool box; Spare parts - light bulbs, filter, head parts, through-hull plugs; Fuel and oil stored properly; Fire extinguisher; Ventilation for cooking or heat; Weather Forecast; Spare batteries for radio and flashlights; 3 Dock lines in good condition; 2 fenders for docking or towing.



## Safety Bits & Pieces

### INTERESTING SAFETY FACTS

According to The Huffington Post:

- \* Every year, approximately 3 million employees world-wide are disabled at work.
- \* Fire kills more Americans each year than all natural disasters combined.
- \* Road traffic accidents costs countries around 4% of their Gross National Product each year.
- \* If you drive after being awake for 24 hours, your response times are impaired the equivalent of someone just over the drunk driving limit.
- \* Pay attention to safety signs. Recent studies show that safety signs which inform you of danger can reduce accidents in the workplace by up to 80%.

### RIDDLES OF THE MONTH ANSWERS

- 1) The faces on Mt. Rushmore!
- 2) An elephant's shadow.
- 3) They're both in the middle of water!
- 4) An anchor.

## QUIZ ANSWERS: DO YOU KNOW HOW TO LIFT PROPERLY ?

**1. Before you lift something, you should test to see how heavy it is by pushing it with your feet or hands. The correct answer is: True**

Experts recommend that you check out how heavy a load is before you move it. If it doesn't move easily, you know it's pretty heavy and you should ask someone to help you. You should also plan ahead and visualize your moves so you know what to expect.

**2. If you want to lift something from the floor: The correct answer is: b.**

Keep your feet shoulder-width apart, bend at the knees and squat until you are level with the object, then use your leg muscles to raise yourself up.

You should always use your leg muscles to help you lift something heavy, including your young child. That's because your leg muscles are much stronger than your back or arm muscles. It's also important to keep your feet shoulder-width apart for stability, and it helps to tighten your stomach muscles to give your back more support. Also remember to lower your load carefully.

**3. If you twist sideways while holding something heavy, you're more likely to injure your back. The correct answer is: True**

Twisting while holding a heavy object can hurt your back pretty easily. Make sure you stand directly in front of whatever you're lifting. If you need to turn, do it once you're fully upright so that your body is always facing the direction you want to go. This goes for picking up babies, too, so position the crib with easy access all around it.

**4. In order for you to lift a heavy object safely, how close should it be? The correct answer is: c. As close as possible**

Holding objects away from your body takes more energy and also increases the load on your arms and spine. For example, holding a box at arm's length raises the burden on the lower spine by 15 times the original weight, making a 5-pound box feel like 75 pounds. Avoid lifting anything higher than waist height, as it can throw you off balance. Once you have your load lifted, try and keep your arms straight down so that your spine is doing most of the work of supporting the load.

**5. If you're picking up something small and light from the floor, it's okay to simply bend over at the waist and pick it up. The correct answer is: False**

Even when picking up a toy or tissue from the ground or putting laundry in the dryer, you still need keep your back as straight and supported as possible -- especially because you tend to do these things often. One good way to reach down is to slightly bend one knee and keep the other extended behind you. Support yourself with one hand on a table or countertop for balance as you pick up things.

**6. Which factors put you at greater risk for injuring your back while lifting?**

**The correct answer is: d. All of the above**

Smoking can affect your back in several ways -- it reduces blood flow, is linked to faster degeneration of the cartilage discs (between the spinal vertebrae), and leads to osteoporosis, too. Poor posture adds a lot of stress on your back's muscles, joints and ligaments. And believe it or not, lifting too slowly can be dangerous because it puts you in a strained, unbalanced position for longer than necessary. (Lifting too fast isn't good either, because you can lose control of your load.)

**7. If you lift heavy objects often, you should always wear a back belt for support. The correct answer is: False**

Back belts aren't a substitute for proper lifting technique, and though they may seem to provide back support, recent studies have shown that the back belts don't reduce the possibility of injury while lifting. One study in the Journal of the American Medical Association analyzed workers compensation claims and back pain complaints among more than 6,300 retail and supermarket employees. Researchers found no difference in claims or disability between employees who wore back belts and those who did not.

**8. While traveling, which of these is the best choice for carry-on luggage? The correct answer is: a. A wheeled suitcase**

Because you need to lug your carry-on bags over long distances, they should be as light as possible. Wheeled bags and suitcases are the best because you don't have to lift the weight yourself. Next best is a backpack with padded shoulder straps and backs, which distributes the weight evenly on both sides. Carrying your load on one shoulder or arm can strain your back, so avoid regular duffles, heavy computer cases, or bulky courier bags. When lifting your larger suitcases -- or even grocery bags -- bend at one knee, keeping your back straight, and pick your bags straight up.



### ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...



"Thanks for the three wishes and here's my card in case you're looking to move into something bigger."

### QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

