



A guide to manual handling

When handling heavy or bulky items, we ask volunteers to reduce the risk of injury by following our guidance and making use of any lifting aids.

A few general tips to follow are:

- Wear suitable clothing. Shoes and boots should be covered and have non slip soles.
- Never attempt to start or continue with a manoeuvre that could be beyond your capacity and ask for help if required.
- Examine the object before you move it – is it stable? Are there any sharp edges or splinters? Would it be better to split the load?
- Check your route – is it clear? Can you move freely without tripping or squeezing past things? Are there steps or slopes to be aware of?
- Vary your tasks throughout the day to reduce fatigue.

A one person standard lift

Plan it out first

- Where is the load going to be placed? Is your path clear? Do you need help?

Get into position

- Stand as close to the load as possible in a stable position and keep a straight back.
- Slide boxes or items on shelves towards you.
- Your feet should be apart and one leg should be slightly forward to maintain balance.
- Slight bending of the back, hips and knees is better than fully flexing your back (stooping) or fully flexing your hips and knees (squatting).
- If you bend your knees fully you won't have a lot of power to lift.
- The load should be hugged as close as possible to your body and if the weight is uneven then hold the heaviest part next to your body.

Start to move

- Use your leg muscles to straighten your legs.
- Don't bend your back any further.
- Ensure you move smoothly and don't twist your back or lean sideways.
- Keep your head up and look ahead and not down at the load you are carrying.

Continued over...

Tips for carrying and unloading



- Keep the load close to your body and your arms tucked in.
- Don't change your grip on the load unless the weight is supported.
- Don't twist your body. If you need to change direction move your feet!
- Don't obscure your vision by carrying something too big. Use a trolley or get help if you need it.
- Bend your knees to lower the load keeping it close to your body.
- Take care you don't trap your fingers or toes when lowering the load.
- Put the load down then slide it into place.
- Ensure the load is secure wherever you place it.
- Make sure it won't fall, tip over or block someone's path.

Tips for lifting

- Where possible, try not to lift anything above shoulder height.
- See if you can lighten the load by dividing it into smaller loads.
- Get help if the object is awkward or heavy.
- Make sure you are standing on something sturdy (do not use chairs, open drawers or desks) use a step ladder if necessary. Otherwise stand with one foot in front of the other.
- Check there isn't anything resting on top of the load before lifting.
- Test the weight of the load by pushing up on it.
- Stand as close to the load as possible, grip it firmly sliding it down your body.
- Ask for help if you feel you cannot lift safely on your own.



Tips for carrying things up and down stairs

- Check stairways are clear and not damaged or worn. Report this to the venue if they are.
- Check members of the public or colleagues are not in the way.
- Check the item will fit round the corners.
- Ensure your vision is not obstructed by the load.
- Check doors or shelves on items such as furniture are securely fastened or removed.
- Ensure the person at the low end is braced to take the weight.
- Ensure the person at the top doesn't stand at an awkward angle.
- Ask for assistance if necessary and get someone to watch and give direction.



Tips for moving awkward objects

- Stand over the corner of the object with your feet apart, grasp the bottom inside and top outside corners.
- Bend your knees and lift smoothly making sure you don't change your grip.

Tips for pushing and pulling

- Ensure you are close to the load, have a good grip.
- Take extra care on slopes.
- Elbows should be in and ensure your hands and feet cannot get trapped.