

# Manual Material Handling

## And Safe Lifting

Statistically speaking, manual material handling/lifting injuries account for about 40% of all workplace injuries. Clearly there is a need for manual material handling/lifting training in every workplace because, to some degree, everyone is exposed to the risk of injury when handling materials.

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### What is a Manual Material Handling Injury?

Manual material handling can lead to injury through the development of musculoskeletal disorders, which are injuries affecting the bones and soft tissue structure of the body.

Manual material handling injuries often include back injuries, injuries to the parts of the spine, sprains and strains of muscles or tendons, strained neck muscles and tendonitis.

### How do Manual Material Handling Injuries Occur?

Manual material handling can be defined as “any moving or supporting of a load including lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying or reaching.” Manual handling also includes tasks involving:

- repetitive actions, with or without force
- sustained and/or strained work postures
- exposure to whole body or hand-arm vibration

### Correcting Manual Material Handling Risks

If you identify a manual material handling hazard in your workplace, work with your supervisor to determine how the task can be done safely and the risk of injury reduced.

There are several ways material handling tasks can be corrected, including:

- eliminating the task by devising a different way of getting the job done
- getting help with the task, such as a two-person lift
- using material handling equipment like carts, dollies or forklifts

