

Manual handling in healthcare

Manual handling causes over a third of all workplace injuries, including musculoskeletal disorders (injuries to arms, legs and joints, and repetitive strain injuries).

Manual handling includes:

- lifting
- putting an item down
- pushing
- pulling
- carrying or moving a load

This may involve risk, particularly of a back injury.

The [eleven] Principles of Good Manual Handling

1. Think before you lift.
2. Keep the load close to your waist.
3. Adopt a stable position.
4. Ensure a good hold on the load.
5. At the start of the lift, moderate flexion (slight bending) of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or the hips and knees (squatting).
6. Don't flex your spine any further as you lift.
7. Avoid twisting the trunk or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent.
8. Keep your head up while handling.
9. Move smoothly.
10. Don't lift more than you can easily manage.
11. Put down, then adjust [if necessary].