

# Manual Handling

REDUCE THE RISK  
REDUCE THE INJURY



## February - Manual Handling

### What is Manual Handling?

According to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (1984)* manual handling is:

*“any activity requiring the use of force of a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain a person, animal, or thing”*

Note: manual handling also includes any activity involving repetitive and/or forceful movements (eg- using a screwdriver) and any activity where the person must maintain constrained or awkward postures (eg- driving a truck).

### Risk Factors for Pain and Soft tissue injuries include:

- repetitive or sustained movements
- poor posture
- inactivity for extended periods- loss of fitness
- Straining muscles beyond their capacity
- Poor flexibility and/or range of motion in joints
- Insufficient warm up or cool down
- Sudden damage caused by intense or strenuous manual handling or awkward lifts
- Exposure to sustained vibration
- Lifting or reaching for loads above shoulder height, or below knee height
- Personal factors such as age, physical dimensions, and any other impairments or injuries

### Back Care

- bend at your knees, not with your back
- make sure you activate your abdominals and hold the close to your body
- keep the normal curves in your spine

### Remember:

- back injuries can be prevented
- be aware of your work postures
- alternate between sitting and standing at regular intervals
- Simple modifications to your work methods, equipment or layout can greatly reduce pain and prevent serious back injury
- Lift everything twice, mentally then physically

The Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 require the employer to identify each hazard that is likely to arise from manual handling at the workplace and to assess the risk of injury or harm.

Pilbara Iron has incorporated its own IronSafe Standards in regards to safe manual handling, to reduce the risk of injury in the workplace.

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## 3 Steps to preventing injury

### 1. Hazard identification

- use of Take 5s and JHA's
- use sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch, knowledge

### 2. Risk Assessment

- prioritise tasks, assess which tasks would more likely lead to injury
- ask yourself what could happen? or What could go wrong?

### 3. Risk Control

- eliminate or reduce the risk of being exposed to a hazard, redesign task, or use equipment.

Manual Handling	Safe lifting weight guide	
<i>Position</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
When seated	4.5kg	4.5kg
Standing (with no additional risk factors)	16-55kg	16-55kg

Note: there is no absolute safe weight to lift. Everybody is different and have different capabilities.

### Ways to stay safe!

- use a common sense approach for assessing manual handling tasks. Consider the weight and context of the task, such as actions and postures.
- Use a trolley or mechanical equipment instead of lifting loads yourself
- Seek help from fellow workmates if load is too heavy
- Use handles where possible
- Lift with your legs, keeping the natural curves in your spine as much as possible
- Hold load close to your body
- Don't carry load over long distances
- Take note of warnings printed on the load itself

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## What if I do get injured?

Follow your workplace policies and procedures for injuries, and report to your supervisor immediately.

**Rest** in a comfortable position

**Ice** for 20 minutes every 2 hours for the 1<sup>st</sup> 2-3 days. Cold reduces swelling, pain, muscle spasm and secondary damage

**Compress** by applying a firm elastic compression bandage from below to above the injured area. Compression reduces internal bleeding and swelling. Make sure bandage is not too tight.

**Elevation** of injured area (if a limb). Reduces bleeding swelling and pain, and gravity helps to drain excess fluid away.

**Refer** to a health professional for a precise diagnosis and treatment.

## Reduce the risk of further injury and decrease recovery time by:

- STOP work, you don't want to make your injury worse
- NO heat: heat dilates blood vessels, increasing swelling and blood flow to the injures area
- NO Alcohol: increases swelling and pain in the injured area
- NO exercise/running: can make injury worse by continuing to load the muscles and injured area, putting pressure on and around the injury site, and increasing blood flow.
- Seek injury management advice from a health professional.