

LIFTING RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, when lifting we are instructed to use our knees or lift with our legs while keeping the back straight. This is accurate information, but it does not mean the back has to be *vertically* straight. It means straight from the hips throughout the entire spine. The correct movement at the hips (not the waist or back) is called “hip hinging”. You can practice how this feels by using a dowel or broomstick, holding it against your low back area and your head. (Please note that people with extreme forward head posture will not be able to keep their head entirely back to the dowel. If when attempting to put your head back to the dowel your chin lifts up, it most likely indicates you have a forward head posture.)

Your back should be in this “neutral” position for the majority of the day as you sit, stand, work, and play. This means your back is neither rounded nor excessively arched. Although we need normal flexibility to bend and turn, we still should function most of the day in this “neutral position”.

Your legs need to be strong in order to use correct body mechanics when lifting. Exercises like squats, steps, and lunges will strengthen your legs. Start taking note of pictures in the newspaper and notice how people use their bodies correctly or incorrectly. Young children and athletes usually are good examples of using the spine in “neutral”; picture basketball, football, tennis, surfing, skating, etc. We require a certain amount of core strength to be able to function well, also. High level core exercises include planks and side bridges.



You can use a dowel to help
Learn “hinging” from the hips.



Keep your back in “neutral”
alignment when lifting.

When lifting, keep the weight close to your body, and avoid twisting and quick jerky movements. Also, in an effort to avoid stressing your body beyond its physical capabilities, do not forget to ask for assistance or use mechanical help, such as wheelbarrows, carts, etc. when an item is too heavy.

Ref: Gregory and Vicky Johnson BET, Institute of Physical Art
Carol Sheats PT, OCS, www.livingposture.com
9/24/03 Revised 03/16/10