## The Mechanics of Lifting

## The elements of your back...

- moveable bones (vertebrae)
- shock absorbers (discs) between the vertebrae
- ligaments and muscles that keep the back aligned in three balanced curves

How Your Back Works

**Unsafe lifting...** is any lifting that upsets your back's alignment, such as:

- bending at the waist to pick up or put down an object.
- twisting as you lift or put down an object.

When you lift unsafely, your back is forced to work too hard.



**Safe lifting...** keeps your back in alignment. You do this by:

- bending your knees instead of your back.
- holding the load close to you.

• lifting straight up, then turning the whole body by moving one foot at a time.

When you lift safely, your legs do the work. not your back.

## Remember...

Back injuries are the most common industrial accident.

Before you lift, ask yourself:

"Does it have to be lifted?

If so, are there mechanical aids available?"

"Can I lift it alone?"

"Is it too big or awkward?"

"Do I have a clear path and good footing?"

LIFTING & MOVING MATERIAL