

How are
you handling

MANUAL HANDLING?



In 2004/2005, there were 359 manual handling claims in the education sector in NSW. This constitutes over 20% of all workplace injuries in the industry.¹

WHAT IS MANUAL HANDLING?

Basically, manual handling is using force - be it pushing, pulling or lifting - to move an object or person.

In schools, almost all staff will need to move something or someone at some time.

- Maintenance staff are often required to move furniture
- PDHPE teachers move sporting equipment such as bags, padding, gymnastics horses.
- Teachers often move audio-visual equipment or stacks of books
- Canteen staff have to move slabs of drinks
- Anyone may need to move a student, particularly if they have been injured.

So manual handling is a risky and frequent business ... but what can you do to lessen the risk?

ASSESSING THE TASK

Before you lift, push or pull, take a moment to step back and assess the task. Ask yourself...

- Do I really need to lift this?
- Can I use equipment to help?
- Do I need another person to help lift this?
- Can I divide the load?
- Should we change the layout of the room or building so items are stored in the safe lift zone or ramps installed instead of stairs to allow use of trolleys?
- Can we purchase smaller / lighter quantities?

For a particularly risky task, or one you do often, you should undertake a formal risk assessment. Define the risks and then consider how you can control them using the hierarchy of controls.

DID YOU KNOW?

53 of the 359 manual handling claims related to moving furniture and fittings.²

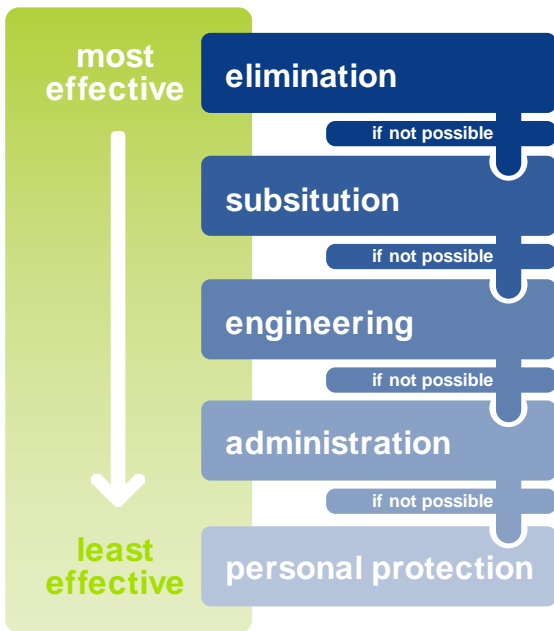
Source:

1. Statistical Bulletin 2004/05 WorkCover NSW
www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
p 118
2. Statistical Bulletin 2004/05 WorkCover NSW
www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
p 118



please turn over

hierarchy of controls



example in practice: Maintenance has to move a heavy dining table

- **elimination** - don't move it! Work around it or choose a different venue where no tables need to be moved.
- **substitution** - purchase lighter, folding tables with casters which are easier to move.
- **engineering** - modify the heavy tables eg place felt under legs and ensure they are on a wooden floor so they can slide easily.
- **administration** - develop a safe work procedure which specifies number of people required to safely lift tables.
- **personal protection** - have workers wear gloves, steel-capped boots and a girdle!

Back to Basics

It's your back - don't bust it!

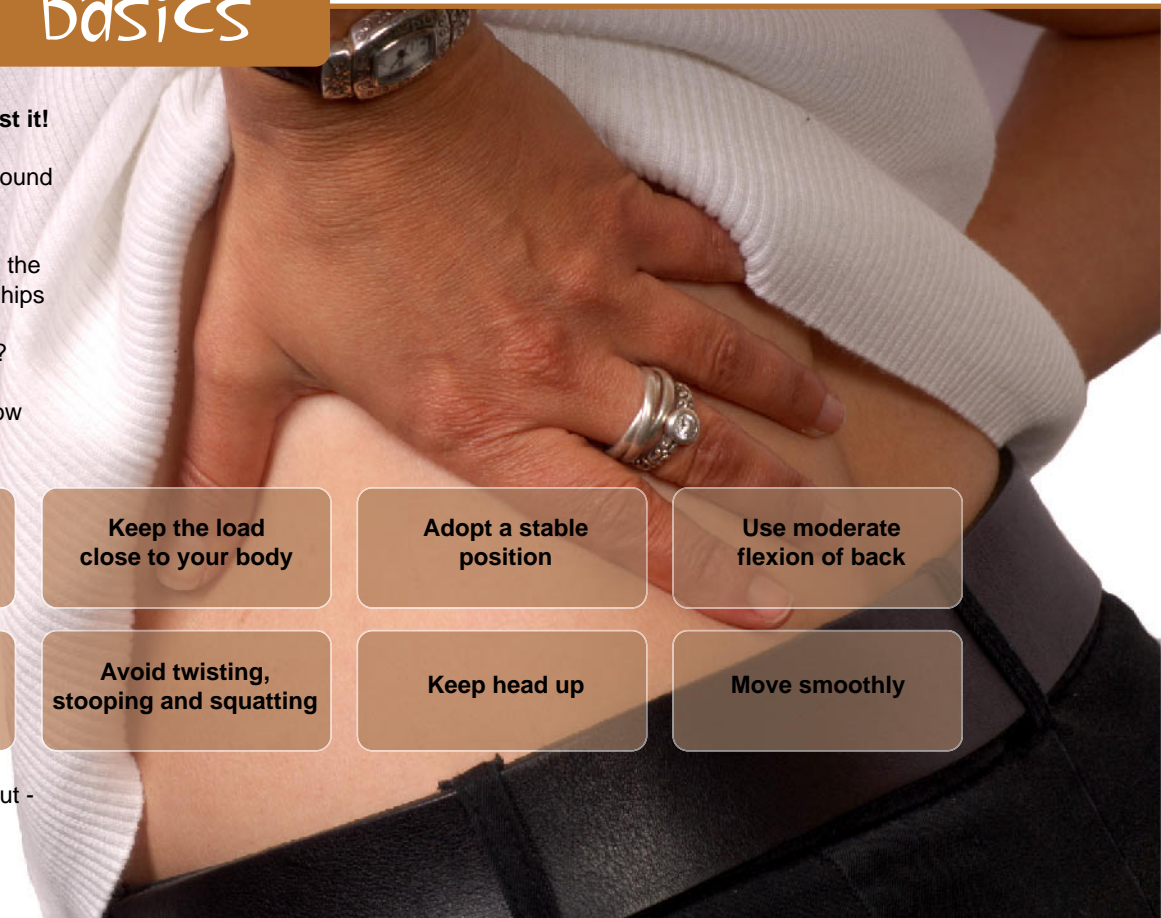
Take a moment to look around your work area.

Are heavy items stored in the safe lift zone, ie between hips and shoulders?
Can you rearrange items?

When you lift, do you follow safe lifting principles?

Think before you lift	Keep the load close to your body	Adopt a stable position	Use moderate flexion of back
Hold the item securely	Avoid twisting, stooping and squatting	Keep head up	Move smoothly

When in doubt, check it out - assess the risk **BEFORE** you lift.



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