

Manual Handling in Summer Season

Key Learning Point = KLP

The Manual Handling Regulations 1992 defines manual handling as:

"...any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying, or moving thereof) by hand or bodily force."

The load can be anything from a small object such as a box, to pushing a trolley or moving any garden waste.

Manual Handling activities are common across a wide range of working environments and have been identified as a major contributor to reported workplace injuries.

Typical hazards associated with manual handling include:

- ✓ Lifting a load which is too heavy or unwieldy.
- ✓ Adopting a poor posture or poor lifting technique.
- ✓ Dropping a load.
- ✓ Lifting a load with sharp edges or one that is slippery or greasy.

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Pushing and Pulling loads also counts as Manual Handling

Manual handling operations can cause a wide range of injuries including muscular sprains and strains (to backs, arms and wrists), slipped discs, trapped nerves, fractures, cuts, and bruises (to feet, arms, and hands), work-related upper limb disorders (WRULDs), and damage to ligaments and tendons.

Your Body and the Effects of Heat

High temperatures can be a major problem within the workplace, regardless of working indoors or outdoors. When temperature rises too much, it can become a health and safety issue. If people become too hot, they risk dizziness, fainting or even heat cramps.

With Manual Handling in higher temperatures, there is an increase in risks that are present. Examples being:

- ✓ **Increase in Sweat** – This can result in having a decrease in grip on the load and increases the risk in dropping the load.
- ✓ **Increase in risk of fatigue** – More exertion in hotter temperatures can impair decision making.
- ✓ **Loss of water in body and salts** – This can lead to dehydration, dizziness, loss of co-ordination

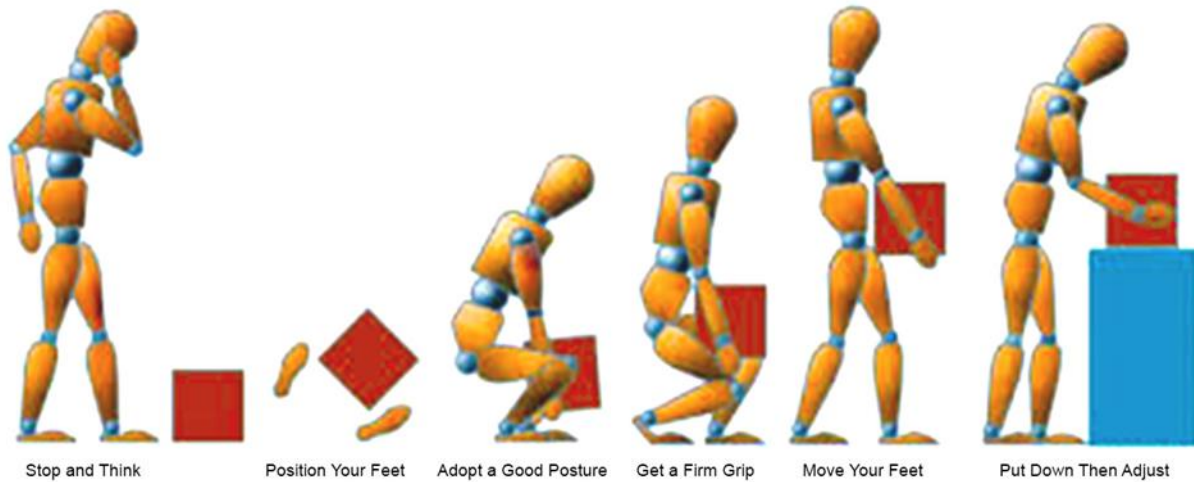
When planning to carry out Manual Handling tasks during the summer, these tips can help to ensure the task can be done in a safe manner:

- ✓ **Regular breaks to intake water** – This will help to keep you hydrated and keep essential salts in the body. It will also help with controlling any fatigue.
- ✓ – If possible, **ensure employees do rotate the task**, so employees do not overexert themselves.

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Regular breaks and water intake is essential in hotter weather

- ✓ **Schedule any manual handling tasks to cooler times of the day.** This can reduce the risk of employees ending up with heatstroke.
- ✓ If possible, **lighten the load** that is being handled. This can mean that whilst there may be an extra trip involved, ultimately it will reduce the amount of exertion



Main Points for Manual Handling

Stop and Think

- ✓ You need to plan the lift/handling activity.
- ✓ Where is the load going to be placed?
- ✓ Are there any handling aids that can be used where possible?
- ✓ Will any help be needed with the load?
- ✓ What is the route looking like? i.e., are there any obstructions or trip hazards?

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Always plan your lift. Think about the stability of the load

Position your feet

- ✓ The feet should be apart with one leg in front of the other (alongside the load if it is on the ground) to increase the stability of your posture. You should be prepared to move your feet during the lift to maintain a stable posture.

Adopt a Good Posture/Firm Grip

- ✓ Ensure you have a good hold on the load. Where possible, hug the load as close as possible to the body. This may be better than gripping it tightly only with the hands.
- ✓ Moderate flexion (slight bending) of the back, hips and knees are the start of the lift is preferable to either fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (full/deep squatting).
- ✓ Don't flex the back any further during the lift. This can potentially happen if the legs being to straighten before starting to raise the load. You should start the movement with the strong leg muscles whilst keeping the back-posture constant.
- ✓ Keep the load close to your waist for as long as possible whilst lifting. The distance of the load from the spine at waist height is an important factor in the overall load on the spine and back muscles. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body.

- ✓ If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.

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Plan the route first before lifting anything

Move your Feet

- ✓ Move smoothly. Do not jerk or snatch the load, as this makes it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.
- ✓ Keep your head up when handling. Look ahead and not down at the load once you have it held securely.
- ✓ Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent. Keep your shoulders level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

Put Down and Adjust

- ✓ If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide into the desired position.

Remember!

There is a difference between what people can lift and what they can **safely** lift.
If in doubt, seek advice or get help!

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