

Manual Handling

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 a person.

Manual Handling causes over a fifth of all workplaces injuries that occur. This can be down to poorly thought out routes or badly performed manual handling.

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.

KLP

Pushing and Pulling loads also counts as Manual Handling

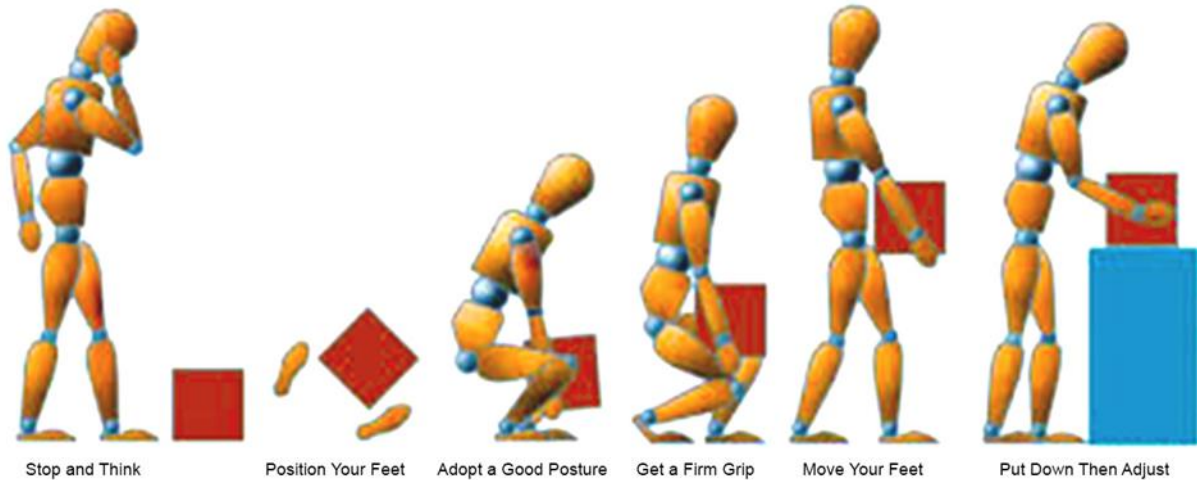
Manual handling operations can cause a wide range of injuries including muscular sprains and strains (to backs, arms and wrists), slipped discs, trapped nerves, fractures, cuts, and bruises (to feet, arms and hands), work-related upper limb disorders (WRULDs), and damage to ligaments and tendons.

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations require employers to: -

- Avoid the need for hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable, e.g. by redesigning the task to avoid moving a load, or by using mechanical aids, e.g. hand-powered hydraulic hoists or trolleys, roller conveyors, hoists for lifting patients.
- Assess the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided.
- Reduce the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling operations, so far as is reasonably practicable, e.g. have in place a safe system of work, make improvements to the working environment, reduce one large load into more, lighter, ones, train relevant employees in correct manual handling techniques.

Employees also have duties under the Regulations to: -

- Follow appropriate systems of work laid down for their safety.
- Make proper use of equipment, including PPE provided for their safety.
- Co-operate with their employer and colleagues on matters of health and safety.
- Inform their employer if they identify any hazardous manual handling operations.
- Take care to ensure that their activities do not put other persons at risk.



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.

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.

KLP

Plan the route first before lifting anything

Put Down and Adjust

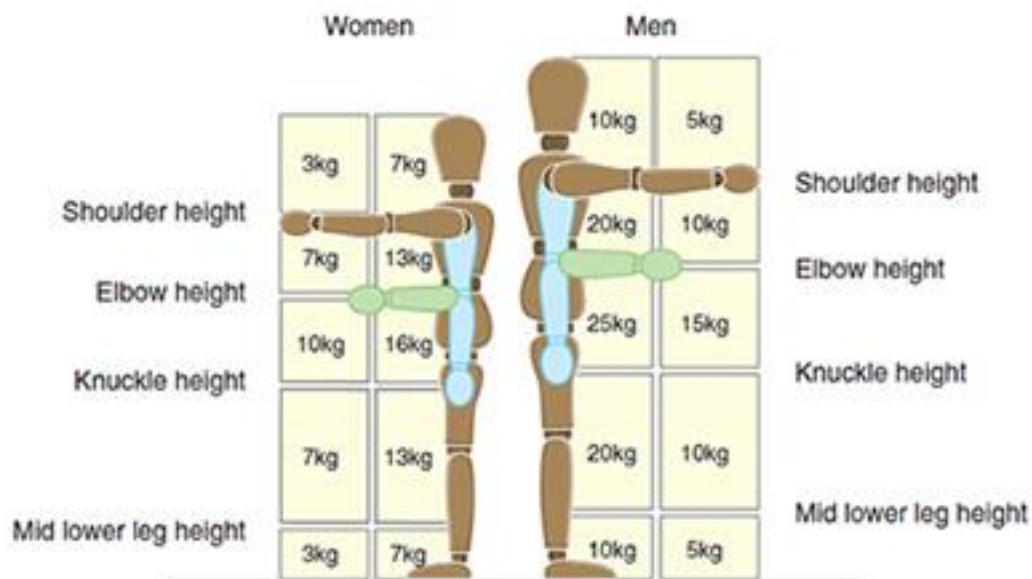
- If precise positioning of the load is necessary, **put it down first**, then slide into the desired position.

Remember!

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

You should also avoid manual handling where possible. Where appropriate or provided, use mechanical handling and lifting equipment.

Below are the lifting guidelines for both Men and Women, produced by HSE.



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